

# Music & Letters

*A Quarterly Publication*

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# *Music and Letters*

MARCH, 1920.

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VOLUME I.

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## NOCTURNE

THE trees at night are twice as high,  
Shapes unrecalled and unforeseen,  
Scaffolded far into the sky,  
Dragged on and on along the green.

Dark, dark about the pool they stand,  
Straight forest stems and saplings tall,  
Like knights and pages, lance in hand,  
That guard Ophelia's liliated pall.

The moon omnipotent in air  
Watches the watchers at the marge,  
And here a tapered shaft and there  
Streaks with her light a massy targe.

BOWYER NICHOLS.

## RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

IN this paper it is proposed to speak not of the man, Vaughan Williams—besides, he speaks for himself, in the next article—but of his music, as faithfully as may be, simply from the sound of it and from the pages themselves.

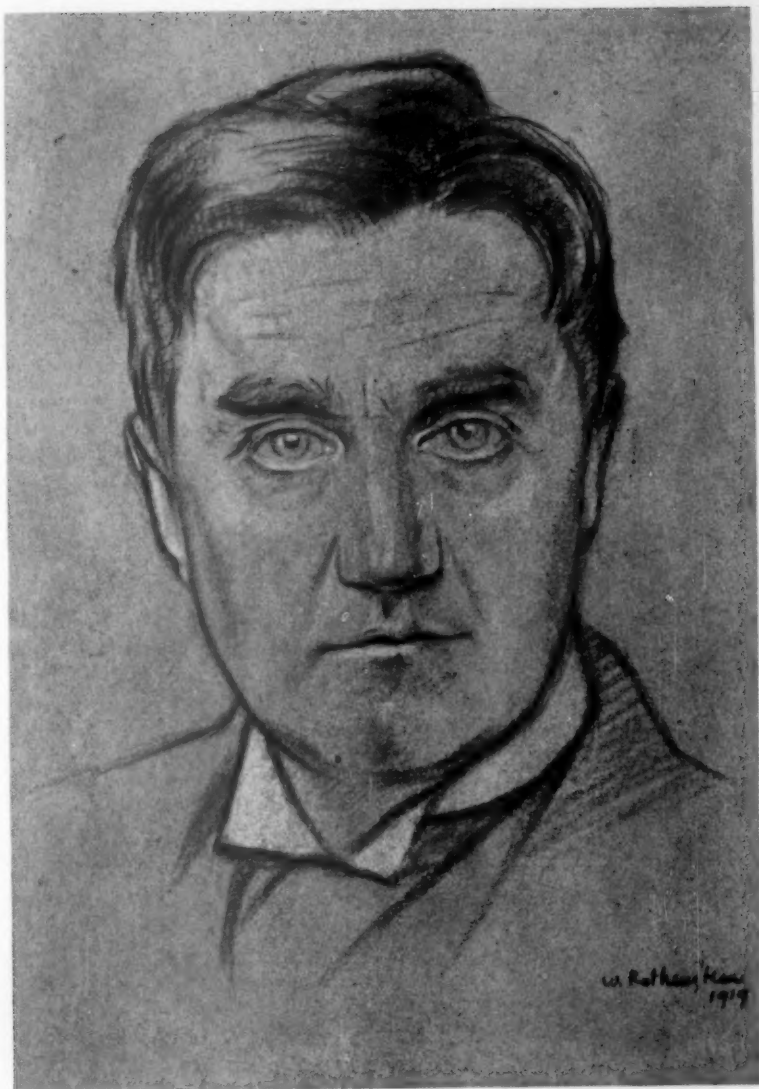
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Of the MSS. I have not seen—

- '98 Serenade for small orchestra.
- '00 Heroic Elegy.
- '04 Pianoforte Quintet in C minor (withdrawn).
- '05 In the Fen Country (temporarily lost).
- '05-7 Norfolk Rhapsodies No. 2 and No. 3.
- '08 Quartet in G minor (lost).
- '11-'14 Opera, *Hugh the Drover* (unfinished).

What are before me, besides the whole of the printed works, are—

- '05-7 Norfolk Rhapsody, No. 1.
- '09 Full Score of *The Wasps*.
- '10 Fantasia on a theme of Tallis.
- '12-'13 London Symphony.
- '14 The Lark ascending.
- Hymns for Tenor Solo.
- Phantasy Quintet.



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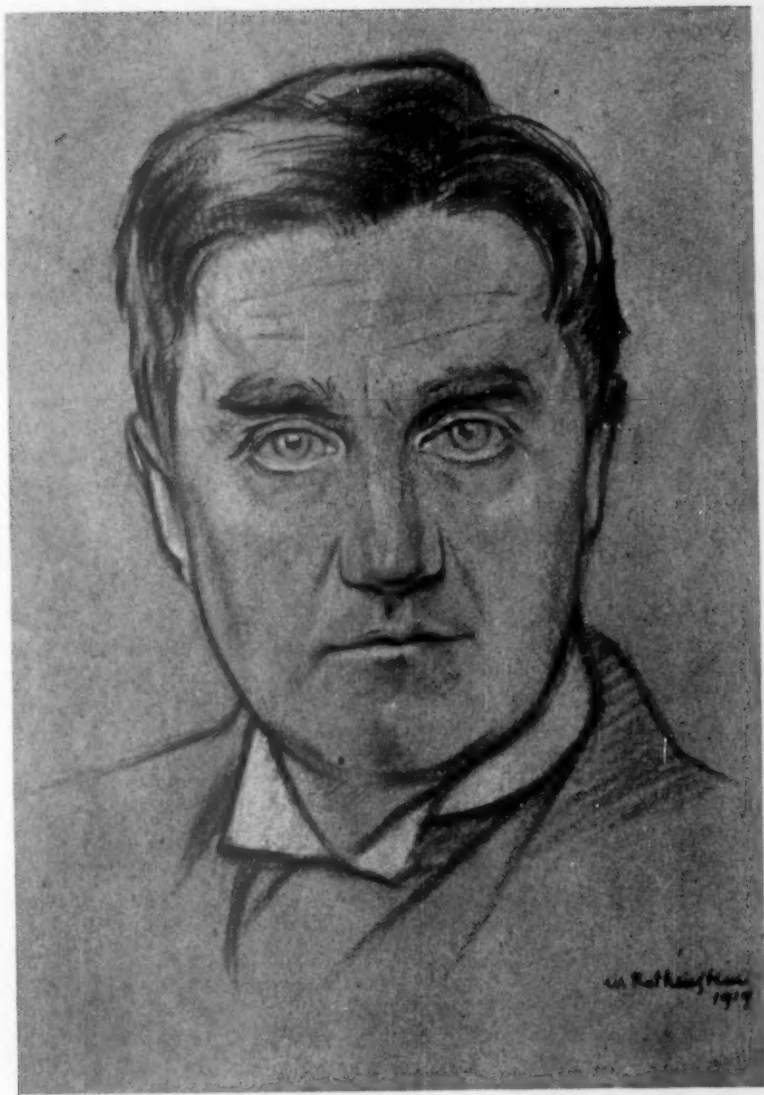
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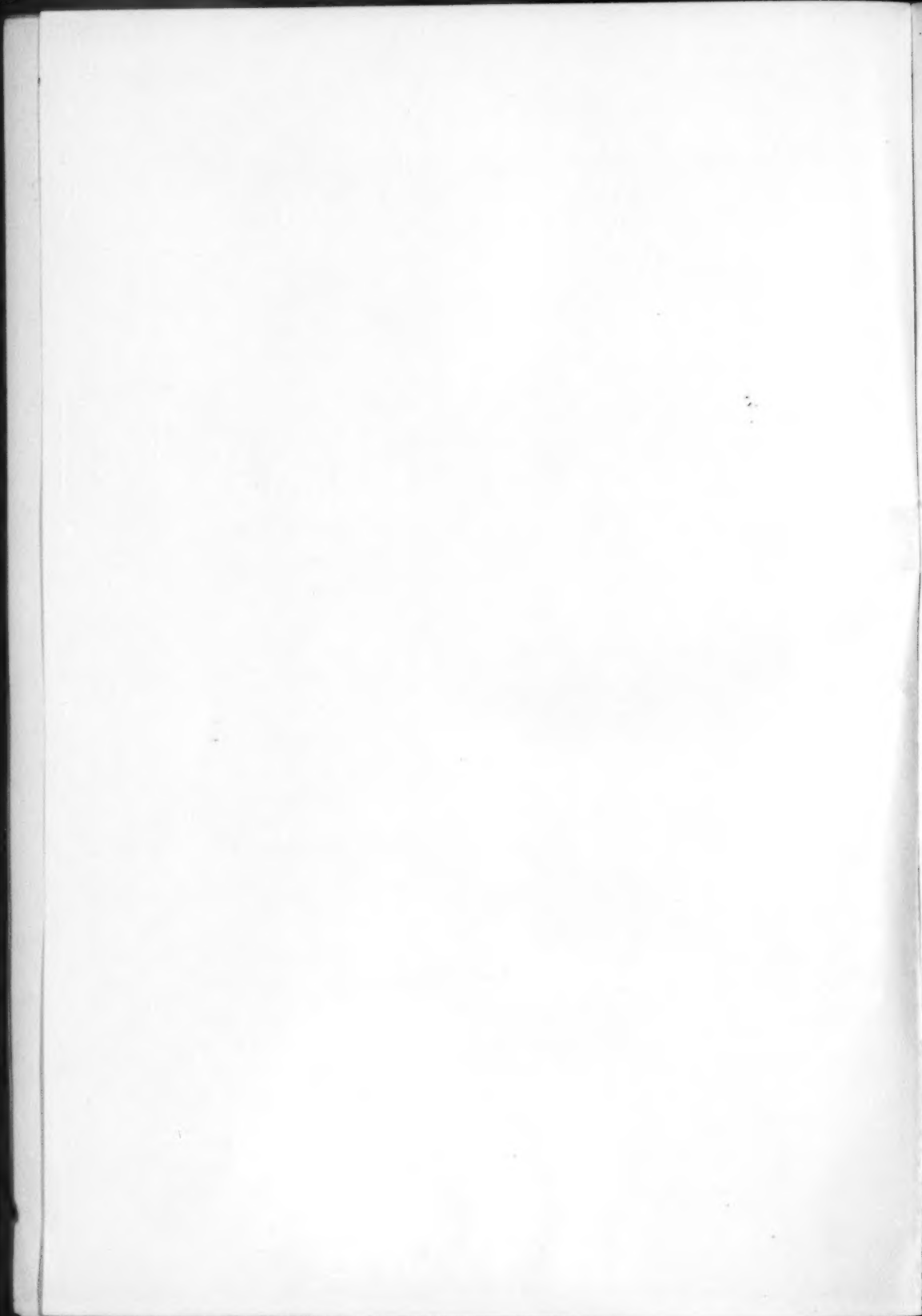
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RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS



—and these, since they comprise all that is most important of the unpublished work, it may be worth while to describe shortly.

The first *Norfolk Rhapsody* (for orchestra) is built upon one of the most pathetic and one of the merriest folk-melodies of England. There are people who do not care for these tunes—on principle, one might almost say; they will not worship at our hill-altars and woodland-shrines. Well, we may concede to them that folk-song has been a little over-praised, and they must grant us in turn that it has sometimes been under-valued. Meanwhile, we shall be content to be sad in the tragedy of "The Captain's Prentice" and happy in the rollicking life "On board a 98" with the crew singing "A bold young sailor" somewhere down among the trombones. It is not the tunes so much as the atmosphere of breezy good-fellowship they spread round them that carries us away; they are not set, like jewels, nor arranged, like flowers, but used, like common everyday things.

*The Wasps*, a successor to Macfarren's *Ajax* (which began the series of Greek plays in 1881), to Stanford's *Eumenides* and *Oedipus Rex*, Parry's *Birds* and *Agamemnon*, Charles Wood's *Ion*, and others given triennially through the intervening years at Cambridge, was performed in 1909 by a dozen string players and a dozen wood and brass, drums and harp. The overture, since embodied in a Suite too seldom heard, is full of truly musical fun, all those things which are the counterpart in music of irrelevancies and half statements, of puns and slang in language. The whole thing pleased lay and cleric alike. It is not pretending to be Greek or anything learned. The wasps are just our own "appledranes," and in the intervals of laying down the law with a pungent sanction they buzz the tunes they learnt in the orchards and hot-houses and dairies of this island; there is nothing remotely resembling either a modern Greek song or the tiresome deductions from defective treatises.

The *Tallis Fantasia* takes its theme from Archbishop Parker's Psalter (see No. 92 in the English Hymnal edited by the composer). To Palestrina's *Stabat Mater* it owes a refrain repeated with varied harmonies on every other page.\* But still more the double chorus of the *Stabat* offered a suggestion for the contrasted bodies of strings. There is a solo quartet, a *tutti* string orchestra and a one-desk string-orchestra, employed like the Solo, Great, and Choir of the organ. To the Cinquecento generally belong the constant wavering between major and minor (third and sixth of the scale) and the *fauz*

\* If anyone examines that work to see how the much quoted opening phrase is metamorphosed in the different stanzas of the hymn, particularly at the words *in tanto supplicio, fac ut ardeat, passionis ejus, fac me plagis, and paradisi gloria*, and compares these with the *Fantasia*, he will see what is meant.

*bourdon* with which the theme first appears. The work was written in June, 1910, and by revisions in '13 and '19 shortened so as to play now about fifteen minutes. It is decidedly representative, developing earlier and struggling with later ideas. The introductory phrase is in essence that which began "Bright is the ring of words" and *Toward the Unknown Region* three years before, and the refrain had just been treated contrapuntally in the *Sea Symphony* at the words "The true son of God shall come singing his songs."

*The Lark ascending* (solo violin, strings, woodwind, two horns and triangle) was written for Miss Marie Hall just before the war. It is based on Meredith's poem, of which the burden is that the lark "instils the love of earth," that he "is" the "dance of children, thanks of sowers, shout of primrose banks, and eye of violets when they breathe," that though most of us "want the key of his wild note of truthful in a tuneful throat" yet we have men, dead or living, who "yield substance" for song "because their love of Earth is deep." The violin floats in a long rapture over some homegrown tunes in the accompaniment, taking little bits of them into its song at intervals. Violin cadenzas are apt to have a family likeness, but these jubilations will hardly remind anybody of anything else. There is very little of the harmless necessary arpeggio or of ingeniously wonderful double stops. It is pure carolling.

The *Four hymns for Tenor Solo* (string quintet with viola sola) are bolder and freer in construction than the *Five Mystical Songs*. The shape of the melody aptly fits the words, and the adventurous counterpoint reminds one of nobody else but the composer (unless perhaps Mr. Holst). The first is an *aria parlante*, the second recalls Brahms's "Joseph, liebster Joseph mein," and the last, an Evening Hymn, is clearly written with Purcell's "Now that the sun hath veil'd his light" in mind, the ground-bass postponing its accent as in the "Elegy on the death of Mr. John Playford" (Walker's *History of Music in England*, p. 176). The melody of the tenor is frequently taken up by the strings, which may well sound as successful as the voice-parts of the *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* certainly do.

The *Phantasy Quintet* (two violas) has been found difficult to play from manuscript. Now that it is to be printed all difficulty may disappear. It is diatonic throughout or, still easier even, pentatonic, with just enough chromatic contrast to make that tell. There is very little indeed of that tossing a phrase to another instrument to finish, which makes Beethoven's later quartets tax good players. There is a *Scherzo-prestissimo*, which looks as if it was meant to be about  $\text{♩} = 300$ , in  $\frac{7}{4}$ ; but no one thinks anything of breakneck speed or queer times nowadays. So its difficulties have perhaps been



over-rated. The quintet as a whole is a piece of good humoured fun, started and maintained to the end by the cello, and enhanced by his eloquent silence in the Sarabande.

We come to the *London Symphony*, now in process of being printed for the Carnegie Trust. Discussion of the form is apt to be a wearisome business to those who have not the sound of the work ringing in their ears; besides, we do not classify Matterhorns, we accept them. An introduction (*Lento*) resting on what we might call the bones of the pentatonic scale, in which the Westminster chimes strike the half hour (harp harmonics and clarinet) leads into an *Allegro risoluto* constantly swept forward by that kind of restlessness which is heard under the "curse" motive in *The Ring*. Into this are packed a number of unconscionably and delightfully banal tunes, their vulgarity emphasized by augmentation—"I really do mean them." And why not? There are things that offend our taste in the streets at every moment, which at every moment we forgive under stress of some feeling that goes deeper than taste, till they too take on a kind of pathos we had never dreamed of before the poet showed it us. In the slow movement, which has been described as an "idyll of grey skies," we are inclined rather to see the home of Blake, who "fished for fancies," and of Chaucer, who was always longing, "*Benedicite*," for the "joly month of May" when he could toss aside "his book and his devotion." A dreamy viola solo followed by a lagging clarinet leads in snatches of melody that melt into one another like the voices of birds on a Spring morning. The *Scherzo*, of which the second *Trio* is now suppressed, is a medley of three-bar and four-bar rhythms and the wildest keys, introduced with a sure hand, containing a wonderful parenthesis in C major, during which the orchestra resolves itself into a giant concertina. The *Finale* begins with a short, tense *Andante*, whose purpose is to emphasize the entry of a march motive which dominates the whole; and this is written—as Handel often wrote, and for the same reason\*—with one flat less than usual in the signature. The chimes and other incidents of the original introduction recur in a shorter and brighter form in the *Coda*. This movement certainly came out in performance less clearly than the others, but that is only an argument for more performances. There is, no doubt, a struggle for expression; but it may be that the fate of our music hangs on such struggles, and that we ought to lend the most active aid we can with our sym-

\* Handel, especially in his early works, writes C minor with two flats and A major with two sharps, because he is writing in modes rather than keys; and the modes so obtained are what are called in Boyce's *Cathedral Music* the mode "with the Lesser Third" and "with the Greater Third" respectively.

pathies and understandings to such moments as this and the last pages of the *Sea Symphony*. We remember the composer going about when it was over, asking friends to tell him what to cut out. The modesty of asking us to look five years ahead of him who is ten years ahead of all of us !

There are one or two ideas to which we may argue from Vaughan Williams's music. First, that an ideal—such as music typifies—is not of much use without a firm hold on practical life. The song of the lark was what it was because of the snatches of human hopes and fears that were caught up into it. The *Symphony* was a valiant attempt to hammer beauty out of ugliness, not to go where beauty was and leave ugliness to take care of itself. The attitude to folk-song is no pose. If music is made of the real stuff of our minds, its staple must be not what we ought to sing by taking thought, but what we do actually sing when we are not thinking at all about singing, but just talking. Then again, his uncompromising *Fifths*—and we do get a little tired of them at times, as of an organist who hankers too much after the “mounted cornet”—are a way of saying that a large part of life is indeed drab, perhaps cruel, and that if we are fools enough not to admit it we shall never understand “what all the blessed evil's for.”

The real claim of Vaughan Williams's music to a warm place in our hearts and, indeed, to a high place in our judgment is that it seldom turns aside for long from those contemplations and reflections which do us credit. He has set no words but fine words, and behind the words no thoughts or situations which have not something fine about them. He has not betrayed his poet anywhere by making him mean what he did not say, nor belittled him by making him easier to understand. It would have been easy to miss the virility behind the happy phrase of Stevenson, or the ache behind the lusciousness of Rossetti, just as some others have not looked in their settings of Housman much beyond the apt verse. In “Bredon Hill,” for instance, they have usually been content with the luxury of a five-line stanza with which the poet has provided them, and have taken off their hat to the bells. But in this setting no particular adornment is won for the tune from the accident of there being five lines, and the bells are not treated perfunctorily. You hear them being clashed from several steeples, not from one, across the coloured counties ; then being rung up, rung, rung down ; and when the funeral bell tolls in the distance you hear the dissonant upper notes, but in church these are lost in the hum-note which is all-pervading.

Just as a poet's attitude towards "poetical" words is of interest so is a composer's towards harmony. Harmony has no laws, we are all agreed, only tendencies. Chords are flavours, qualities of notes, hardly definable, only desirable, that easily become antiquated or slip into mannerism. Weak composers find their colour in a paint box, with strong ones it grows on the palette. Here, the colour appeals to us not by its wealth or its iridescence but its crude strength. It springs from the interplay of "common" chords—in principle, the music contains few others—and these are placed in unexpected appositions. The great strength of these triads is heard in the last bars of *Wenlock Edge*. A short, clear instance is at the beginning of the Phantasy quintet.

1st Viola.

mf

pp (Add Violins.)

ppp

1st.

etc.

Violas and 'Cello.

Incidentally, the first two chords are a sort of τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος—the first *Allegro* of the *London Symphony* and, with the chords in reverse order, two movements of the *Sea Symphony* also begin so. When all is said, his harmonies are very plain—clear to the understanding and restful to the ear. Harmony itself is no more than a dress, and dress, as Talleyrand omitted to add, was given us to conceal our emotions. They are so plain that the protest has been made that to listen to Vaughan Williams is like talking with somebody in an unfurnished room. Acknowledging the truth in the criticism, it may be answered that that is hardly a degree worse than a conversation upon which a rabble of pictures looks down from the walls, and that in both cases what matters is the subject of the discussion. People like Franck, whose harmony

is at all times no more than the extended personality of the melody, are much to be envied.

How humdrum, some one will say, to make common chords the basis of the harmony—as bad as writers who pin themselves to words of one or two syllables! But there is a whole principle involved in it. Does originality in music consist, as some think, in bringing more and more dissonances into the province of the consonant, or not, rather, in exploiting the well-known chords and making them say new things—which I take to be the moral of Prof. H. J. Watt's new book? Does progress lie in the direction of "chromatic harmonies" or of "chords in a key"? It is difficult to say, because the classic writers seem to us to do the latter, whereas they very likely seemed to their contemporaries, if we may judge from what we see around us now, to do the former. At any rate it is worth noting that here is a modern who is not only broadening the outlook of key, but seems also to his contemporaries to be doing so.

It has been said of Vaughan Williams that he has "theories" of folk-song, and that he has "coquetted" with it. His own way of putting it is that when he heard "Bushes and Briars" for the first time he said to himself that that was the music for him. His mind has a natural affinity with those who express themselves directly. He has had no theories about it, he has simply practised it. It is true he has set many folk-songs and in the *Christmas Carols* and *Norfolk Rhapsodies* he has used them as *canti fermi*. But what he does in most cases is not only to talk folk-song as to the manner born, but also to eschew conceits, and to say out the things that matter as directly as the folk-poets themselves do in dialect, that language which is older and pithier than any literary tongue.

It is worth while to consider in what sense he uses this musical dialect in the one work where everyone recognizes it. The cycle *On Wenlock Edge* was what secured him a welcome in Paris. Frenchmen are quick at tasting a new flavour, and here was one they had never known. Their reception of it as something new suggests that the criticism this side of the water which pronounced it to be full of Ravel, merely because it was the first work he produced after he came back from taking lessons with him, was ill-considered. There is nothing in it of Ravel's very individual technique (in the quartet, for example), of his feeling for the piano-forte, of his attitude towards the song of "atmosphere"—nothing in common between them at all but the Frenchman's dislike of a *parti pris* and the Englishman's independence of judgment. Moreover, there is the strong contrast, that Ravel derives if anything from the court of Louis XIV and its musicians, and Vaughan Wil-



liams tries his best to get away from all that that implied and back to untutored motive.

The essence of the folk-song idiom is that the melody swings boldly from pivot to pivot, and does not employ the balances of "civilized" music. In its scale those pivots are fixed, and as long as the tune to be harmonized is preserved intact, new balances cannot be introduced without unsettling them. But it is possible to write melody taking the pivots of the folk scale on a different plan or in a different order, in plain words, to take the facts of mode and to distribute them by keys, and so to combine the directness of the one with the strength of the other. This proposes a task whose discipline is of great value. It forces a composer to create a new technique, as the philosopher says "to realise his concepts," or as the plain man says "to know what he means." Hence the verdicts that he "lacks technique," that his counterpoint is "untidy," that his harmonies "do not modulate." But those who pronounce such verdicts do not fully understand the task he has set himself to accomplish; they forget how much harder it is to take the everyday things and make them beautiful, than to borrow beauty ready-made and label it as one's own patent. They ought rather to be glad to be present at such a gallant enterprise, as those may call it who will one day listen to the great English composer of the future. There are moments in his music, no doubt, when we are reminded of the walls of Tiryns, with blocks 10ft. by 3ft., bedded in clay; walls which, though the architect did not care much about technique, have lasted long enough for us to forget his name. Technique is the manners of music, without which it is partly dumb. To be able to hold manners and character in equipoise is a gift of the gods. One may ask why he thinks it necessary thus to tie one arm behind his back, whereas others go gaily ahead with harmonic invention and contrapuntal devices, putting forth so much that they seem sometimes to be writing with both hands. The answer is that these devices tend to blur if not to obliterate tune, and that he intends his tune—not an eight-bar thing, but tuneful invention—to be a vital statement.

A vital statement often utters an uprightness of mind, energy of will, and sincerity of feeling. These are summarised in the word religion, and it is difficult to define in what sense music is religious, apart from any specifically religious words. Perhaps, remembering that music is itself a language, we might say of religious music what we should say of the words of the Bible. It does not lose sight of the past; it takes the musical phraseology we all know, the figures that a hundred songs have made familiar, the chords on which climax has pivoted time out of mind, and sets them anew.

It reiterates, as Matthew Arnold said, its *Miserere, Domine*; and even more than in its insistence on the noble, its sincerity lies in its rejection of the petty. It does not fear blunt statements, for it puts the worth of the matter above the neatness of the manner. It economizes, because it has much to say and little time to say it in. If it has uneventful pages, they are there not as the failures of imagination but as those points of rest on which less capable writers do not venture. No doubt most serious music holds one or other of these alkalis in solution, just as most men acknowledge the claims of morality on one or two points. But if it holds them all, then it is sound music, and, through whatever imperfections of achievement, it gets near to that "living resolutely in the great and the whole" which is religion.

Without putting it only on that ground, and yet not forgetting the ground is there, whose music is there of modern Englishmen, after Parry's, that we want to use on the great occasions of life, except this? There is something in that noble climax of *Toward the Unknown Region*, in that basic rock over which the scum and froth of a great city float in the first movement of the *London Symphony*, in the surge of melodies in the first movement of the *Sea Symphony*, in the steadfast purpose of the many songs—"Claribel," "Love-sight," "Orpheus," "The Sky above the roof," "Youth and love," "Bright is the ring of words," "Give to me the life I love," and half a dozen more—in the joyous serenity of the *Five Mystical Songs*, especially the first and last of them, in the singlehearted glee of the *Christmas Carols*, most of all in *Wenlock Edge*—hard, deep-seated Englishry, honest without gush, sensitive without lyrical rapture—there is in these something that, like a course of Browning, corrects the Tennyson in us, and learned or unlearned, invigorates us all.

THE EDITOR.

## THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT

*"Whereto serve ears, if that there be no sound?"*

LORD VAUX.

THAT the art of music is essentially one of sound is a proposition which would seem too obvious to need proof.

Yet it is the opinion of many people that the really musical man prefers not to hear music, but gets at his music silently by reading it to himself as he would a book.

Many years ago there appeared in *Punch* a picture illustrating the supposed growth in the near future of musical appreciation; the barrel organ was to be replaced by itinerant conductors turning over the leaves of scores and beating time. The picture represents two street-boys reading the score and watching the conductor, while the following conversation takes place:—"Eavenly adagio ain't it, Bill?" "Yes, but he takes the *tempo* too *accelerato*."

Now Mr. Punch may be taken as always representing faithfully the average point of view. This then is the average opinion, that when the street-boy becomes really musical he will no longer want to hear music but will be content to look at it. And this theory has the sanction of some of our acknowledged leaders of musical thought.

Sir Henry Hadow, in an address lately published with the *imprimatur* of the President of the Board of Education, says:—" . . . It is a very low order of education which does not enable a person to read a page or write a letter without reading the words aloud. The same degree of education which enables us to read a page of Shakespeare to ourselves would enable us equally well to read a page of Beethoven."

Again Dr. Arthur Somervell is reported to have said the other day at an educational conference:—"When we go into a shop to buy a book we do not ask the salesman to read over a few passages to us, in order that we may see if we like it: we read for ourselves. Yet with music how many there are who ask that the piece shall be "tried over" for them before they buy. They ought instead to be able to read it for themselves, without playing or singing."

And, to quote once again, the very distinguished amateur musician, Alexander Ewing, in a letter to Dr. Ethel Smyth wrote as follows:—"A work of Bach's . . . exists for us on paper and in performance: two kinds of existence, differing in degree perhaps, but the one as real as the other."

I venture to believe that the opinions quoted above are founded on a fallacy—namely, that to read silently a page of Beethoven is the exact counterpart of reading silently a page of Shakespeare.

Before going any further may we take it that the object of an art is to obtain a partial revelation of that which is beyond human senses and human faculties—of that, in fact, which is spiritual? and that the means which we employ to induce this revelation are those very senses and faculties themselves?

The human, visible, audible and intelligible media which artists (of all kinds) use, are symbols not of other visible and audible things but of what lies beyond sense and knowledge.

The symbols of the painter are those which can be appreciated by the eye—colour, shape and the appearance of natural objects; the symbols of the poet are words and their meaning; and the symbols of the musical composer are those of the ear—musical sounds in their various combinations. To say that poetry when read aloud uses the symbol of sound is only to say that poetry then borrows to a slight extent from the sister art of music. But to realize how little part the ear plays in the poetic scheme one has only to imagine the spiritual effect of (say) Homer declaimed aloud to two listeners, one who did, and the other who did not understand Greek. If sound was a large factor in poetry the spiritual effect on both hearers would be nearly equal; as it is, we know that the effect of declamation in an unknown language is almost negligible, and the reaction to the stimulus must be referred to music rather than to poetry. To a listener who understands the meaning of the words the actual sound of those words doubtless has a powerful emotional effect but only in connection with the meaning and association of the words spoken. When a poem is read in silence the sound is absent, but the meaning of the words with all that they symbolize is still there.

Where is the symbolic effect of a printed page of music? Can a page of musical notes and a page of poetry be compared in any way? It seems absurd to ask such a question; yet it is necessary, because there is a wide-spread notion (shared as we have seen by some of the most distinguished musical thinkers) that a printed page of music is the exact parallel of a painted picture or a printed poem.

The art of music differs from poetry and painting in this, that



it involves two distinct processes—that of invention and that of presentation. It is just possible that in very primitive kinds of musical improvisation the acts of invention and presentation may be simultaneous. But it is difficult to say that there are any cases in which the act of invention did not slightly precede the act of presentation; at all events in the ordinary case of a composer singing or playing his own compositions he is simply acting in a dual capacity, first that of composer and then that of performer; the two processes are quite distinct.

In the other arts this is not so; the invention and presentation are one process. The painter paints his picture, and it is a complete work of art; all that is needed further is a pair of eyes and the heart and mind to realize what one sees. The poet writes his poem, and there it is ready for everyone who has learnt to read and who understands the meaning of words. But a musical composition when invented is only half finished, and until actual sound is produced that composition *does not exist*.

How then is the musical composer to make his invention live in actual sound? If it is a single line of melody or capable of being played on one instrument he may be able to complete the work himself. But how if his invention requires more than one voice or instrument? Then he must seek out others who are capable of making the sounds he desires and must instruct them when and where to make these sounds. For this purpose a clumsy and unprecise code of written signals has been evolved, which by convention indicate that certain sounds are to be made.

This code of signals or series of orders is known as a musical score, and has about as much to do with music as a time-table has to do with a railway journey.

What the musical composer, in effect, says to his performers is:—“I desire to produce a certain spiritual result on certain people; I hope and believe that if you blow, and scrape, and hit in a particular manner this spiritual effect will result. For this purpose I have arranged with you a code of signals in virtue of which, whenever you see a certain dot, or dash, or circle, you will make a particular sound; if you follow these directions closely my invention will become music, but until you make the indicated sounds my music *does not exist*.”

So a musical score is merely an indication of potential music, and moreover it is a most clumsy and ill-devised indication. How clumsy it is may be seen from the importance of the “individual renderings” of any piece of music. If the composer could indicate what he wanted with any precision there would be no room for this; as it is, two singers or players may follow faithfully the composer's

intentions as given in the written notes and produce widely different results.

Under our present system of musical notation the composer can give only the most general indication of what he wishes. Perhaps future generations will devise something more precise; though whether this will be an advantage is doubtful.

The art of music requires two minds (or one mind acting in two distinct ways) to produce the final result—the inventor and the presenter (in other words the composer and the performer). If the composer is wise he will not try to make his score “fool-proof” but will wait for that twin-mind which will translate his imaginings into sound, and consummate that ‘marriage of true minds’ which alone can give his music life.

It is, of course, not to be denied that the power to realize to a certain extent by visual inspection what sounds will result from this code of signals (in other words to read a score) is an almost necessary part of the expert musician’s equipment; but this power will not make him musical, any more than the knowledge of machinery which is necessary to a watchmaker enables him to tell the time.

It is also true that pleasure and exaltation of spirit of a certain kind is the result of this power; more especially is this true of the pleasure of memory evoked by reading the score of a well known and often heard work.

It was Lord Rosebery (I believe) who once said that when he could not go for a holiday he bought a guide book and trusted to his imagination for the rest. Certainly if you have once been to the Malvern Hills you can to a certain extent re-live your impressions by reading in the guide-book that “300 yards further on a small footpath leads off to the right (difficult, but fine *view*); guide unnecessary; milk (1d. per glass) can be obtained at the cottage on the right”—but who can pretend that the emotions roused by this are the same as those he experienced when he first climbed the hill and saw all England spread at his feet?

So it is with music; the pleasure and profit of reading a score silently is at the best purely intellectual, at the worst is nothing more than the satisfaction of having accomplished a difficult task successfully. It is not the pleasure of music. This can be achieved through the ear only.

In what does being “musical” consist? It should be possible to be a first-rate musician and yet not be able to read a note of music, never to have heard of Bach or Beethoven, nor to know by sight the difference between an oboe and an organ; and, conversely it is possible to be able to do all these things and yet be no musician.

To be really musical one must be able to *hear*. The ear must be sensitive, the mind must be quick to grasp what the ear has heard and see its connection with what has gone before, and to be prepared for what is to come, and above all the imagination must be vivid, to see the glimpses of the heart of things which the composer has crystallized into earthly sound.

To educate a child in music is to teach him to hear; then and then only he is a musician. I am far from saying that the power to read music, the knowledge of musical history, an intelligent interest in the technique of instruments will not be a great help to him when once he has learnt to love music, but they must never be allowed to take the place of music; we must first seek the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto us.

How does the composer invent? Does he not hear the melodies and harmonies which he makes with the mind's ear only? But what is it which he invents? Not the little black dots which he puts down on paper but the actual sounds which those black dots represent. He wishes to be in spiritual communication with his hearers. To do that certain sounds are necessary; and until those sounds are heard the spiritual contact is not established. And does not the composer also need actual sound to produce in him that spiritual state which he hopes to induce in others? Does not the actual shock of sound help to fertilize his imagination and lead him on to still further musical invention? The text books, of course, are horrified at the idea of "composing at the piano" and hold it to be the sign of the incompetent amateur. The answer is that everyone must use the means which enable him to do the best. If a composer finds inspiration in the bass trombone or the accordion, by all means let him use them. There is fairly conclusive evidence that Beethoven, Wagner and Elgar used the piano-forte in the course of composition and that Rheinberger did not. The inference is obvious.

In primitive times the intervention of the written note between the composer and the performer did not exist. The primitive composer either sang his simple melodies himself or taught them orally to others; and there is, theoretically, no reason why a composer should not invent a symphony and teach it to an orchestra of performers without writing down a note, provided both he and they could cope with such a prodigious feat of mind and memory. The writing of notes is merely a convenience, necessary owing to the comparative feebleness of our memories and the want of concentration in our minds. To hold up this mere convenience as an ideal to be aimed at, is, surely, to put the cart before the horse.

We have taken it for granted up to now that an expert musician

can mentally bear exactly the sound of any piece of music—that, though he cannot actually feel the emotion he can realize exactly what the effect on him of every harmony, melody or rhythm which he sees written, would be if he heard it. But how far is this true? Doubtless when the music is simple or of an accustomed type, the musician is on sure ground; but when anything in an unaccustomed idiom comes his way, is he not often out of his depth when trusting to the eye alone? Even in the case of comparatively simple music is it not possible to realize mentally the whole sound and yet miss the beauty? Any fairly equipped musician can look through a piece, say, of Purcell and realize exactly how all the notes would sound, but can he be sure whether he has realized its beauty? Or to take a simpler example still—is it not a common experience with anyone to look through a single line of melody like a folk-song and be entirely deaf to its emotional appeal until he has heard it sung?

But a musician may answer:—"I can trust my powers of score reading enough to judge a piece as beautiful if I can see beauty in it by a silent reading of the score."

"Yes," I should answer, "but how if you cannot see beauty in it? Will you then trust your judgment? Will you not feel bound to hold it up to the test of the ear? If not, you have not given it a fair judgment." Why is it that it is always the dull unimaginative music which gains the prize in a competition? Is it not because the adjudicators are content to look at the music and not to hear it?—with the result that anything which *looks* right on paper is judged to be good, and everything which *looks* unfamiliar and awkward is rejected? A pianoforte arrangement should be demanded with every score which is sent in for a competition; then the adjudicator can have the music played through to him and become familiar with the *sound* of the work before he proceeds to criticize it in detail. What an amateurish way of setting to work! Yes, but the only way of getting at the truth.

I foresee an objection here. It may be said that to play over an orchestral piece on the pianoforte is not to give the true sound and is no nearer the truth of music than the inspection of the score. The ideal way, of course, to judge of a piece of music is to hear it as it was intended—then, and then only, can we get into absolute communion with the composer; but even from such an unsympathetic medium as the pianoforte we do get a certain shock of sound which will help us to a certain extent to obtain a glimpse of the vision which the composer is trying to convey to us.

Are we then to be slaves of our bodies? Will not the mind be able eventually to free itself from all bodily trammels and get to the essence of things without physical intermediaries. It may



indeed be argued that when we are actually hearing music the physical ear plays only a small part in our understanding of it. The physical ear can do no more than receive one moment of sound at a time, and our grasp of even the simplest tune depends on our power of remembering what has gone before and of co-ordinating it with what comes after. So that it seems that the mind and the memory play even a more important part than the ear in appreciating music. Why not go one step further and eliminate the physical ear altogether? Let us hear music with the mind's ear only.

Perhaps in future years this will happen—a new art will be evolved in which the mind of the composer will be in direct touch with the mind of his audience. But this art will not be music—it will be a new art; and with the new art a new set of means of communication will have to be devised. Our old system of dots and dashes which go to make up a music-score are, as we have seen, no more than a code of directions to makers of musical sounds; if the sounds are not to be made, the code of directions will no longer be necessary, and our score-reader's occupation will be gone.

Certain types of musical thinkers seem to have inherited the medieval fear of beauty—they talk about “mere beauty” and “mere sound,” as if they were something to be feared and avoided. But in our imperfect existence what means have we of reaching out to that which is beyond the senses but through those very senses? When Plato praises the Dorian Mode as inspiring courage, does he mean the Dorian mode written out on paper? When the trumpet sounding the charge rouses the soldier to frenzy, does anyone suggest that it would have just the same effect if he took a surreptitious glance at a copy of *Military sounds and signals*? Would any amount of study of his own score have led Haydn to declare that his “Let there be Light” came straight from Heaven?

Surely, while music is the art of sound, it is the ear which must be taught its language; when a new art supersedes it, a new language will necessarily follow in its train.

R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS.



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## HUBERT PARRY

IN art, as in other branches of human activity, there is a tendency for every age to react against the age that immediately preceded it. This is natural enough and healthy enough, and it makes on the whole for a just alignment of artistic values. Sooner or later the pendulum swings back, and carries us with it, but it does not leave us just where we were before. The first enthusiasm has been tempered by the fire of criticism, and we see our poet or our composer more steadily than we could otherwise have done; we appreciate his virtues, it may be, more soberly, but we can also make a juster allowance for his shortcomings. In regard to Parry, the time has not yet come for this critical appraisal; we are still too near him, the dust of conflict has not yet cleared away. The desire to write a few words about him now is therefore not prompted by the hope of passing a verdict upon him that posterity will accept, but by the less ambitious desire to introduce an element of sanity into the discussion. For hitherto the indiscretion of his friends and the zeal of his enemies have alike been excessive; the latter, largely represented by men of what one may call the faded revolutionary type, have never forgiven him for being a person of importance in his own day and for his audacity in winning Wagner's battles before they had begun to fight them; they have lost no opportunity to sneer at him, and even now can scarcely bear to let him rest peacefully in his grave. His friends, on the other hand, have never admitted the existence of shortcomings and inequalities which are painfully obvious to any one who cares to read, and by this well-intentioned but extravagant loyalty they have done great disservice to one who would certainly have wished, like Cromwell, to be painted "warts and all."

In considering Parry's work as a whole, we may do worse than recall Mr. Arthur Symonds' fine appreciation of G. F. Watts in his *Studies in Seven Arts* :—

"There is a profound kind of originality which becomes so by its very refusal to take any of the obvious roads to that end. The style is not in any complete sense the man, but rather the man, the spirit of the



SIR HUBERT PARRY

FROM A LITHOGRAPH BY WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN, 1897





man, pervades his work with a kind of self-abnegation, resolute to speak 'the language of great art,' and that language only, no matter who may have spoken it before, with indeed a grateful humility towards all those who have spoken it."

These words might equally well have been written of Parry, and they contain the reason why Parry's music makes only a limited appeal to the present generation. Style and personality lie at the core of all true art, but this age, erecting them into a fetish, has lost sight of their real significance—the significance they had for Parry. We have come to mean by personality merely that which differentiates a man from his fellows; essentially it means a great deal more than that; it includes the whole character of the man; not merely his idiosyncrasies but his common humanity; that which he shares with other men, as well as that which is peculiar to himself. And, falsely narrowing the conception of personality, we have likewise narrowed the conception of style, which is too often taken to mean merely some trick of pen or brush, some exploitation of mannerism that shall cause a man's work to seem not as other men's works are, and so pass for originality. For Parry, style means simply the most skilful adaptation of means to ends. This view of it, implicit in his composition, is explicit in his historical and critical writings, more particularly in his book *Style in Musical Art*, which is virtually a historical compendium of musical technique analysed from this point of view. For such a man there could be only one artistic ideal—to be in the tradition; he would either float on the main stream, or not float at all. To paddle in a lonely backwater could have been no temptation to him, for he could never have persuaded himself, as lonely paddlers must, that their backwater is the ocean. He lacked the spiritual arrogance that is necessary to make such an illusion possible.

Before we pass to the further consideration of Parry the composer, let us pause for a moment to consider Parry the man. He is a mass of contradictions, for he is at once eminently characteristic of his age, and emphatically at variance with it. In appearance he was typically Victorian, large, bluff, and violent. Like other Victorians he took a profoundly ethical view of things in general, and was disposed to believe that the best of everything, spiritual and otherwise, was to be found in Germany. This ethical idealism he combined with a hatred of creeds and dogmas, and a complete renunciation of theological belief; for the pietistic and quietistic aspects of religion, again, he seems to have had little sympathy or understanding. In all this, as already stated, he was a typical product of his age. It is when you turn to his political beliefs that you become aware of a discrepancy. He was a Radical in

the days when Radicalism was a cause that no real gentleman could espouse. Conservatism we knew and Liberalism we knew : they might differ about Free Trade, but they agreed in accepting the industrial system as a natural and proper development of the social order. Of course there were some who questioned it, but they were dirty dogs—socialists, anarchists, and people of that kind. They did not count. But here was someone who was not a dirty dog, but a member of a well-known West Country family, educated at Eton, of good address, alive to the virtues of old port, who yet refused to believe that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds, and, we gather from his friends, voiced his disbelief in no uncertain terms. No wonder he was felt to be something of a problem. Moreover, to make matters worse, he had graduated as Bachelor of Music before leaving school—and we must remember that in mid-Victorian England art was by no means spelt with a capital A. The President of the Royal Academy made a decent livelihood out of his pictures, no doubt, and Mr. Tennyson was a beautiful gentleman whose poems were much admired by the Queen. But music—no ! All very well for foreigners.

Well, that has been largely changed now. The man of business does not look up to the artist as to one frankly his superior, as he does (or did) on the Continent. But he does tolerate him as a sort of chartered lunatic, and to please him he even pretends to treat him as an equal, though in his heart of hearts, of course, he knows better. If this change in the status of the musician is now an accomplished fact, if the composer or the conductor knows that when he goes to dine in the houses of the great he will not be sent to take his place above the parson but below the valet, to feed on cold beef and small beer instead of quails and champagne, let him remember that it is Parry more than any one else whom he has to thank for it. This alone should entitle Parry to the respect and gratitude of all musicians, be their opinion of his music what it may. For he did not get his way without a struggle. However, that is a digression, though not an unimportant one ; what we have to remember is that Parry is in himself a twofold contradiction ; Parry the Victorian idealist has to be offset against Parry the political rebel, and this rebellious, protesting Parry in turn has to be squared somehow with Parry the musical Conservative, the staunch upholder of tradition. As we shall see, this conflict of tendencies had a strong influence on his music, particularly the music of his later period. We shall return to this later ; before doing so, it will be as well to consider his music generally under the twofold aspect of Form and Style.

His style, it may be said at once, is not superficially an attractive one. He scarcely ever writes a good tune in the sense in which, for instance, Purcell, Schubert and Brahms write good tunes—the kind of tune that can make you enjoy a work for sheer musical delight in its subjects, apart from the interest that may be aroused by their treatment, and even in his finest musical declamations, there is hardly a trace of the true lyrical rapture. His rhythm is often too square, and too heavy footed; his energy is apt to spend itself in mere bustling semiquavers; he gives us neither the dynamic insistence of Beethoven nor the subtle intoxication of which many modern composers have discovered the secret. His harmony, again, is staid and unadventurous—not at all the kind of thing we are accustomed to in these days of aural titillation. All these limitations hit you right in the face at the outset; it is only on a deepening acquaintance that you realize you have got a good deal less than half the picture. With many composers you gradually become aware that they have the defects of their qualities. With Parry the process is reversed; it is only by degrees that you discover him to possess the qualities of his defects. His melody may not give the rapturous thrill that one gets from the great lyric writers, but it has a singular dramatic truthfulness, it follows both the sense and the accentuation of the words with a fidelity that no English writer before him had ever approached; it has moreover a sustained power, it does not expend itself in a single outburst. And (on the negative side) it is never sickly, or mawkish. His rhythm, again, so stiff and heavy in his instrumental works, becomes quite a different thing in his best choral writing. It has the dignity and spaciousness appropriate to the choral style, something that is essentially architectonic, and is concerned in some indefinable way with the management of climax, quite as much as with the manipulation of metre and accent. It is rhythm in the larger reaches, of which “Blest Pair of Sirens” is a well-nigh flawless example. His harmony, as we said, is not in itself of particular interest; its chief characteristic is a free use of accented passing notes and diatonic discords, which gives it great strength—the kind of strength one finds in the opening of the overture to “Die Meistersinger,” whose first twenty-five bars or so might almost have been written by Parry. It is probable that we shall accept harmony of this kind more readily a few years hence than we do to-day, when, as M. Vincent D’Indy observes, we have erected a process into a principle, and harmonic research has become the starting point from which nearly all our young composers set out to conquer new worlds. Parry could not conceivably be the vogue to-day; for him, harmony is not a master

but a servant, merely one element in music that has to be viewed in its true perspective with the other and (in his view) more vital elements of melody, rhythm, and texture—and one might add, of form. For if there is one thing in Parry's treatise on style that one feels disposed to criticise, it is the divorce of form and style. At first sight it seems as if one could simplify the problem by keeping them apart, but the deeper one goes into it, the more conscious one becomes of their mutual interaction, and of the perplexities in store for the composer who thinks that form is a problem capable of being treated in isolation. But that is by the way; it is of Parry the composer that we are now speaking, not Parry the critic. It is of form, however, that something must now be said.

It is generally agreed that it is by his choral works that Parry stands or falls. In the instrumental writings you rarely get the real Parry; his melody lacks inspiration, his rhythm lacks freedom and vitality; the interest hangs too largely on the elaborate development of themes not inherently attractive. The appeal is too exclusively to the intellect; the work, in short, is academic. Moreover Parry's failure in the matter of orchestration is proverbial; he could never free himself of the polyphonic habit of thought sufficiently to treat the orchestra (as it must be treated) in mass. In his theoretical writings he recognizes this problem of orchestral texture very frankly, and discusses it with great insight, but his own compositions offer no practical solution of it. It is not likely, therefore, that his orchestral and chamber works will ever be revived to any considerable extent, though here and there one finds some really splendid ideas—notably in the E minor variations for orchestra, where a fine incisive theme is treated with great breadth and dignity. As regards his choral music, there is no doubt that what stands in the way of more frequent hearing is the form in which much of it is cast. A great deal of his best work is buried in the discredited oratorio form, and a good deal more in semi-sacred cantatas of an alarmingly ethical character and rather unmanageable dimensions. This choice of form is due partly to his inclination, partly to his environment. As we have seen, he was sufficiently under Teutonic influence to lean naturally to subjects of a didactico-religious nature, while he was sufficient of a Victorian to accept the quasi-dramatic oratorio as a normal and satisfactory institution. Moreover, much of his work was specially written for provincial festivals, and the devotion of the English provinces to oratorio was even more unswerving then than it is now. So it is not surprising that Parry wrote largely in this and kindred forms. To us to-day this form seems merely a fatuous



attempt to compromise between the humanity of the stage and the respectability of the church, and it is difficult to believe that *King Saul*, *Judith*, or even *Job*—the shortest of the three, and in many ways the finest—could be revived, in London at any rate, with hope of success. Yet, as was said, they contain some of his best music, both as regards the choral writing (Parry's choral technique is always irreproachable, whatever his orchestration may have been) and the solo work, where the narrations of *Judith* and the lamentation of *Job* reveal the composer's power of sustained melodic declamation at its very highest; in particular, the passage beginning "Man that is born of woman" is one to which the most stolid can hardly listen unmoved; the highest praise one can give is to say that the melody here is worthy of the words which inspired it. *Judith* is in its way the most characteristic thing he ever wrote. Who but Parry would have thought of welding the stories of *Judith* and *Manasseh* together and presenting them as an oratorio, with a preface apologising for the "sanguinary catastrophe" of the story, and laying stress upon its aspect as a popular movement? And the astonishing thing is that under his hands it really does take on that aspect; the dominant impression left by it is one of a winning naiveté and homeliness in which every character in the piece, including *Moloch* himself, becomes a sort of personal familiar, whose immolations and other terrifying experiences excite in us the same vivid and sympathetic interest as the adventures of *Dick Whittington* or *Little Red Riding Hood*. Just look at *Manasseh's* soliloquy, "What dread my soul possesses! What helpless fear and anguish"; at the ensuing chorus (priests of *Moloch*), "Bring now the children" (one almost hears the whispered aside, "What a good fire you have, Granny!") "The better to roast you on, my dear!"), at the chorus "Crown we the stainless victims," at *Manasseh's* solo, "When Israel transgressed, and wandered from God's way," at his triumphant outburst, "God breaketh the battle"—who can read these without a feeling as of something intimate and domestic, which we love the more because we cannot refrain from smiling at it. There are other works for which we admire Parry more, but none by which he so endears himself as this, none in which he takes us so completely by surprise—or is it we who take him by surprise, discovering his childlike simplicity of heart when he least expects it? Who would have dreamt of finding in this eminent Victorian the same innocence of soul that is so loveable in *Heinrich Schütz*?

As a song writer at any rate Parry needs no apology, and even if his larger works continue to slumber on the shelf, there is no reason why the ten volumes of "English Lyrics" (now all pub-



lished) should not keep his memory green. The choice of words in these songs reveals a catholic and fastidious literary judgment; they cover a very wide range of mood, which is faithfully reproduced in their settings, whilst in the scrupulous observance of the verbal rhythm (always a difficulty to the English composer, owing to the subtle displacements of stress which are part of the genius of the language) he is, as ever, a model to all composers. And here as elsewhere his writing is curiously individual—one says curiously, because his style is so devoid of tricks that when one comes to define its characteristics one is compelled, as we have seen, to fall back largely on negatives. Yet there is scarcely a page in his entire works that is not plainly and unmistakeably Parry. Indeed, if one has to criticise his songs, that criticism must be that his style is too inflexible, that the wide difference in the styles of the poets he has set is not reflected by a corresponding (though necessarily a smaller) difference in the style of the music. It is quite open to question whether this is a fair criticism; certainly the problem is one that has only been raised in quite recent times, and it is one towards which composers have taken up widely different attitudes. It is very possible to maintain that a song is a single artistic creation, of which (provided the prevailing mood be appropriate to the words) you are entitled to ask no more than that it shall bear the sign-manual of the composer. Of this view Parry's songs prove him a representative. Other composers, like Butterworth and Vaughan Williams (or, to take a foreign instance, Hugo Wolf) show themselves more sensitive to the need for realizing in their songs not merely their own style, but to some extent the style of their poet. Mark the difference, for example, between the "Songs of Travel" and the "Mystical Songs"; each is unmistakeable Vaughan Williams, but each again is a modified Vaughan Williams as compared with the Vaughan Williams of the "Sea Symphony." And there are yet other composers, whose aim when setting words, appears to be simply to bring out all there is in those words; they are content to merge their own personality for the time being in that of the poet. Here one might take John Ireland as an example; "Adoration" is singularly true to Symons, "If there were Dreams to sell" to Beddoes, but would one guess that the two songs were by the same hand? Probably not, and probably their composer never intended that one should. In any case, each of these three attitudes is theoretically capable of defence; if the present writer inclines to the middle one, that is no more than a personal opinion, and a criticism based merely on a personal opinion is only offered for what it is worth.

It cannot be denied that Parry's later work, taken all in all, is

a disappointment, that it fails to fulfil the promise of his early maturity. The author of "Blest Pair of Sirens" and "The Glories of our Blood and State," of "Job" and "Judith," did not go from strength to strength as the greatest composers have done. For this it is not difficult to see a twofold explanation. In the first place, by accepting the Directorship of the Royal College of Music in 1894, he incurred an administrative responsibility heavy enough in itself to tax all his powers—certainly heavy enough to prevent him from bringing to his creative work that intense concentration of faculty which it demands. Here, at the risk of overstepping the limits of musical criticism, one must record the conviction that he had no business to accept that appointment. His business was to write music; there were, one gathers, no financial embarrassments to prevent him devoting his life to that purpose, and that he failed to do so is more than a matter of merely personal regret. He may have been, as his friends aver, a very distinguished holder of the office; it would be quite out of place to discuss that question here. The point is that other distinguished holders of the office could equally well have been found; administrative capacity is by no means rare, whilst the creative faculty, in the measure in which Parry had it, is extremely rare, and the routine duties of an official appointment should never have been allowed to interfere with its untrammelled exercise. That his choice was dictated by any unworthy motive, of course, cannot be suggested for a moment; the suggestion is only worth mentioning in order to dispose beforehand of possible misconception. But we do say that his acceptance of the post was a very grievous error of judgment, and that he would have done far greater service, both to his country and to music in general, by declining it. It is to this cause that we must attribute the want of concentration so apparent in much of his later work—the diffuseness and inequality of the musical thought, the fitfulness of the inspiration, and even certain mannerisms of style, an over-partiality for sequential writing for example, and a mechanical habit of building up a climax stepwise over a dominant pedal.

Apart from all this, however, it is doubtful whether he could ever have fulfilled adequately the task he set himself in his later writings, which was nothing less than to make music the embodiment of his whole philosophy of life. This, as was said above, was mainly of a religious, or as we should rather call it now, an ethical character. Religion for Parry meant largely the regulation of man's conduct to man; it was a matter of character and works, not of theology or mysticism. Moreover, he was keenly alive to the existence of injustice, poverty, and oppression, and very deeply

angered by the prosperity of the oppressors ; at the same time he was a good enough Victorian to hope and believe that sometime, somehow, all would work out for the best. He was a genuine idealist, but his idealism was not afraid to face unpalatable truths. How he eventually wove these different strands of belief together may best be judged from the poem "The Vision of Life," the words of which are by himself, whilst their musical setting constitutes his most ambitious work, though it cannot be regarded as his masterpiece. This same ethical idealism is reflected in most of his later subjects, in the E minor Symphony, for example, where such headings as "Work," "Play," "Strife" \* are prefixed to the different movements ; or in such choral works as "The Love that Casteth out Fear," "The Soul's Ransom," "Beyond these Voices there is Peace," as well as in the last motets, to which he has given the collective title "Songs of Farewell." Of these, two at least, "There is an Old Belief" and "Never weather-beaten Sail," have a resigned spiritual beauty hardly touched elsewhere in the whole range of musical literature. But as a whole, this later music does not voice the message he wanted to convey ; his style is not equal to the demands made upon it. It retains its old strength and austerity, but the intentions of the composer have moved far beyond the limits of "Prometheus" or "Job," whilst his vocabulary has not extended at all. His musical conservatism has been too much for him ; he has not been able to weld his style into an instrument of such infinite subtlety, flexibility, and expressiveness as would be needed for the translation of this philosophic survey of human affairs into terms of music. His failure is by no means complete ; in many places, besides the motets above mentioned, he does touch a depth unsounded in the earlier works ; but in between them are long stretches where the creative energy flags. In so far as his failure is due merely to a refusal to bow to his own limitations, it is a noble failure, a failure more admirable and more inspiring than many another man's victory. But one feels all the time that but for the energy consumed in official duties which he was under no obligation to assume, he might have come very much nearer success than he did.

A word should be said in conclusion about his critical and historical writings. It is on these, as Mr. Dent pointed out recently, that his reputation abroad mainly rests, but though they are widely known in this country, it is doubtful if we have yet assessed them at their full value. The erudition of the man is remarkable, and so unobtrusive that you scarcely realize as you read what an

\* I quote from memory, the score of this work being apparently not yet published.

enormous amount of material he has contrived to pack into so short a space. Almost any one of them—the book on musical evolution, the book on style, the volume of the *Oxford History*—contains enough matter to form the basis of a volume double the size. And he has the true historical perspective; he sees facts and tendencies not in isolation but in correlation with other facts and tendencies; and though his penmanship is not highly finished, he has a rare gift of lucid exposition. Naturally, his serious cast of mind and his reverence for tradition are reflected in his historical outlook; his reverence for the giants leads him to put perhaps too modest a valuation on the work of the pioneers and explorers, the Monteverdes, the Purcells, the Scarlattis. But against this must be set his championship of Wagner in the days when Wagnerism was by no means the respectable cult it has since become. It must also be remembered that a widespread re-adjustment of musical values has been taking place these last fifteen or twenty years; French, Russian, and other traditions have sprung up to challenge the Teutonic supremacy, and the war has given a forced and sometimes a chauvinistic impetus to movements that were originally a natural and spontaneous growth. Violent passions do not make for sanity of judgment, and in another twenty years a calmer revision will probably show that Parry's scale of values is nearer the truth than many of us to-day are inclined to admit. In the meantime let us pay him the tribute that is due for his wide intellectual grasp, his dignity of mind, his devotion to what he conceives to be the highest; above all, perhaps, for his contemptuous rejection of all that is merely sensuous or merely sensational. Be certain too that if you search you will find these qualities inherent in his music as well as in his writings; in whichever capacity you take him, he is better as a friend than as an acquaintance. Of how many composers to-day can one say as much?

R. O. MORRIS.



## THE VIOLONCELLO

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I feel shy and embarrassed to write for your journal, as you can see I am not a writer. But you asked me to tell you something about the violoncello, its literature, school, etc., and so I will do it; but beforehand I must apologise for my amateur-like way of conveying my ideas in a foreign language, with which I am not too well acquainted.

The violoncello is perhaps the most remarkable of all instruments on account of its scope. It is the only instrument really capable of sustaining a bass for any length of time, and also of singing a melody at almost any register. It is true that the violin and viola can both sing melodies and form the bass, but the depth of their lower notes is not sufficiently heavy to enable them to form the actual bass instrument of any work. It is true there are one or two works in which the viola forms the bass, but beautiful as these works are we could not listen for very long without feeling a longing for the deeper tones of a bass with heavy foundation. A musical instrument should be the means, either alone or in combination with others, of conveying a message to the world. The study of an instrument should be directed from the beginning with this end in view. The possibilities of the cello are almost infinite, and are perhaps only in their infancy as regards achievement. This can be judged by the very limited repertoire of really good music so far written for it. By far the most important artistic productions are in the chamber music written by the greatest masters. The really first-rate concertos can be numbered on less than the fingers of one hand. Almost the same may be said of the solos either with orchestral or piano accompaniments. Why should this be the sad fate of the violoncello? Is it owing to the deficiencies of the performers or is it really true that the cello is not a successful solo instrument?

The violoncello "carrière" as a solo instrument everybody knows does not date very far back. With the exception of Boccherini, Romberg, and Duport there was not a famous name until the middle of the nineteenth century. Servais, Grützmacher, Davidoff,





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Piatti, Popper, Hausmann, etc., represent a *pléiade* of great cellists. Some devoted themselves more to the technical side of the cello, others showed a finer taste for the classical side, the greatest of these latter being Piatti and Hausmann.

They all left a mass of creative works, concertos, studies, transcriptions, and small pieces (Hausmann's share being most valuable as editor of classical works). But for all that, the cello's literature is still very inadequate, and very few of their works are ever performed in public in our days. Why? Is it not because the public of to-day requires far more than merely virtuosity, and because cellists' compositions have too little interest from the musical point of view? Speed, harmonics, double notes, spiccato, are valueless as an end in themselves. *Music* is what is needed, not the means by which it is brought about. Technique is necessary as a vehicle of expression, and the more perfect the technique the freer is the mind to interpret the ideas that have animated the composer. But technique must not be studied just merely as equipment. It must always tend towards music itself. The cellist should endeavour to rid himself of the susceptibility to make noises. It is quite extraordinary how few there are who can play without making noises. A noise is not music, neither can a simple musical phrase be beautiful which contains any sound other than a beautiful sound. How long will it be before cellists will realise that if the cello does not hold its place with the piano or violin in a concert room as a solo instrument, the fault does not lie in the cello nor in its literature but only in the player!

The cello in the past, and to a great extent in the present also, seems to be the one instrument in which audiences and critics (and even musicians occasionally) will bear bad intonation, scraping, harsh sounds, and almost everything which is anti-musical. Not long ago I heard a cellist playing rather important works for quite a small, but musical audience. He was far from being equipped either cellistically or musically. To begin with, his intonation was mostly wrong, his technique very imperfect (and it is amazing how few cellists are able to finger a piece with some understanding, so as to prevent passages showing too much trouble on the cello); the treatment of the bow extremely *gauche*, producing crescendos in the middle of each note, which gave a monotonous impression to the whole performance; he lacked all sense of rhythm, accent and precision, his pianissimos being of such a thin colour that for the most part they disappeared under the sound of the piano; the worst was the poor conception of the works he was performing, so that everything from beginning to end was dull and utterly unmusical. The lady at the piano was as bad as the cellist

in every way. This sort of cello playing is alas, too frequently going on, and something ought to be done to prevent such irreverence towards music and towards the instrument. Yet the public listens patiently with dull faces, and yawns, but nevertheless, behaving respectfully by tradition, endures it with the same resignation as the congregation in a church where the priest, following the choir, attacks the responses in a different key altogether, singing with a most appalling voice, *généialement* out of tune. Also, I saw a criticism of this particular concert in one of the most important papers, which praised the rich singing quality of tone of the cellist, his artistic abilities, and further went on to say that the "ensemble" was skilfully managed by both players.

If critics, concert-giver, and public are pleased with such ignorance, then it is hopeless to try to raise the standard of achievement of the one and appreciation of the other. People ought to protest, critics ought to have the courage to say the truth, schools of music ought to stop pupils from giving concerts of responsibility before they are ready for them, and even teachers ought to be put through a test to see if they are capable of directing each pupil in the right way.

There was a splendid article in *The Musician*, January number, by H. C., called "The Recital Scandal" from which I quote this:—

"As regards the Press, the critic should either be allowed to speak the truth candidly and bluntly, telling the artist that he or she is unfit for public and professional appearance, or else ignore the concert altogether. The latter course would be the more drastic and effective, as where no notice is forthcoming, such concerts would immediately cease, since Press publicity is the main incentive."

A fine soloist is not always a great teacher, neither is a great teacher necessarily a fine soloist. I know cases where a teacher does not actually play the instrument, but nevertheless produces very good pupils. He must have a great knowledge of the instrument and the special gift of presenting his ideas theoretically; but the average teacher is neither theoretician nor practician, and the pupil is a sufferer.

With singing you often hear of a teacher making the serious mistake of telling a soprano that her voice is a contralto, or telling a baritone that his voice is a tenor. We have heard the same of doctors who have committed the grave error of giving a false diagnosis. This error might have killed the patient—the wrong advice to the singer might have spoilt for ever the most beautiful voice. Has anyone ever thought what bad teaching can do to a pupil who possesses a great gift? Personally, I think the harm







PABLO CASALS

done is equal in the two cases mentioned above, and the result worse, for the others die or sing no more, but the cellist still goes on playing, developing wrong muscles, faulty ear, bad taste and inflicting upon the world the sins of his master.

In my opinion the reason why the cello is played in such an uneven manner is because the cellists do not realise the undoubted possibility of conquering almost every technical difficulty which exists in the study of scales. One of the chief difficulties for a string player is that he must make his own notes. Scales, carefully studied, will show him where to find them, how to change position, they will lead him to perfection in smoothness and evenness in crossing strings (one of the biggest traps for noise-making). Scales are beautiful, they are a mine of gold for those who have the interest to search; they help articulation, control of the bow, every quality of strength of tone, how to finger works, in fact the scale is the basis and, to my mind, the only point from which technique and music can be brought united to perfection. But alas! how rare it is to find anyone who has the slightest conception of a scale as anything but an unpleasant necessity, or any sense of its harmonious relationship to musical ideas.

I shall avoid talking here of living cellists as much as I can, or mentioning names for the sake of comparison, but I am bound to bring a name forward which is, in the opinion of the whole world, the one which stands pre-eminent among those of living cellists. This name is Pablo Casals. It is not his biography I am going to trace, but I must say a few words about his work and its immense value to the coming generation of cellists.

Casals played almost every orchestral instrument between the ages of five and twelve. It was only then that his predilection for the violoncello became manifest. He studied for a very short time under José Garcia in Madrid, but soon he found his way alone, and in no time became the greatest cello exponent of the present day. He revolutionised all the cello schools and created one which gives scope to all possibilities of the cello as the instrument capable of the finest musical expression, and this school is based on nothing but logical principles. He laid the greatest stress on the common scale, and was convinced that if a cellist could play a scale perfectly he could play anything. He discovered that to sit down and hold a cello, to place the bow on the strings, and to use the thumb position, one need not distort oneself. He realised the work of art in such a way that his body took naturally the corresponding shapes and movements, and thus he was able to harmonise what the French call *l'esthétique* with his technique and musical sentiment.

If the 17th century had Domenico Gabrieli followed by Domenico Galli, if the 18th century had Luigi Boccherini and later on Romberg, Dotzauer and Duport—the last perhaps the most famous of all—the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century has in Pablo Casals the greatest of all, the one that carried to a much higher degree the cello technique; and it will be due to him that the cello will take rank, not only by the side of the violin, but as the first bow instrument there is. It is to him that we owe the revival of such works as the Bach suites, Beethoven Sonatas, Haydn and Schumann concertos, all of which he plays in such a manner as to convince the world of their beauty. (Bach suites had so far been given merely as studies in the schools). It is the essence of music that emanates from his performances, and he becomes an intermediary between the composer and the public, one with a perfect technique, which is the equivalent of words expressing thoughts, and this is the ultimate aim of the musician. Only such a musician deserves the crowning name of artist.

The chamber-music player has not anything like the freedom of the soloist. His interpretation depends upon the sympathy and understanding of the other performers, the technique required differs almost in kind from that of a soloist. It can never be a technique of display but must always be subservient to the music. A chamber-music performer has to be capable of self-sacrifice. The player who attracts notice to himself in chamber-music is a bad player. He may be a great soloist; but if he cannot become equal with the rest without in any way dominating them, then he is not a good chamber-music player. Perhaps it is for this reason that hardly ever does a soloist make a good quartet or trio player, and *vice versa*.

It is extraordinary what a pitch of unanimity and spontaneity can be reached by four musicians who have played and rehearsed quartets for years. The question of *ensemble* hardly exists for them. While rehearsing a work, those who are real musicians spend their time endeavouring sincerely to reach the composer's thought. *Ensemble* falls almost unconsciously into its place, and if at a concert one notices particularly the *ensemble* or the pianissimos or other technical points, something is nearly certain to be wrong with the interpretation. It is the *work* which matters, and *ensemble* and unanimity are the mere elements of interpretation in chamber music. They are the means to an end. It is quite possible that the reason why sonatas for piano and cello are generally believed to be a failure is because very rarely do two players join forces and decide to play and rehearse together these works, just as a string quartet rehearses. Why should they not do so? The



MADAME SUGGIA'S MONTAGNANA

TOTAL LENGTH FROM HEAD OF SCROLL TO BUTTON (NOT INCLUDING PEG) IS 40 IN.





works are much more difficult from one technical point of view than are string quartets in one respect, namely in the balance of the two instruments.

Sonatas for piano and cello are absolute chamber-music and should be rehearsed just as carefully and exhaustively as a string quartet, if not more so owing to the greater problems of balance. If a pianist and a cellist decided to become sonata players and rehearsed and performed for years together, the question of balance would then become a mere incident in the interpretation. At the present moment it is that almost unsolved problem which makes these particular sonatas a failure. Each of the five sonatas of Beethoven is a complete work of art and was written by Beethoven in such a way as to be an absolute success. Beethoven did *not* make a mistake. The piano and cello parts are marked with the utmost care and in such a way that if they were given as they should be we should soon find audiences and music lovers everywhere discovering new works of Beethoven! Beethoven had no steel-framed piano to play upon or to write for, but he had the old Italian stringed instruments almost as they exist to-day. His piano had possibly only one quarter of the tone of the present day piano, while the strength of tone in the stringed instruments must have been the same as to-day.

The two sonatas of Brahms, also the three of Bach, although written for Viola da Gamba, are all equally successful if careful study is given them. Brahms of course wrote for the modern pianoforte, and the careful study of the piano scores of these two sonatas shows quite clearly that he understood the balance of the two instruments absolutely. It is the performers who are responsible for the general belief that sonatas for piano and cello are a failure. It is owing to that lack of a technical accomplishment, the knowledge of balance between the piano and cello, that musically these works are hardly ever a success.

Then there is the orchestral cellist. I wonder how many people give him a thought! and how many realise what tremendous gifts of patience, of being able to read at sight, and of possessing the power to read at sight *and* follow the conductor's beat, are essential to every single orchestral player, before he can hope to obtain a position even as the humblest member of a band! He must practise in order to fulfil all the requirements of modern works. He has to sit through probably six hours of rehearsing for every concert we listen to, and though he may disagree altogether with the conductor's musical idea, must absolutely sink himself and obey that relentless stick. He must always be counting bars, looking for marks of expression. In more modern works there are continual

changes of key and *tempo* which force him to be on the alert literally for every minute of the time he is playing. He never dare forget himself, but must keep his mind and wits clear in a manner hardly conceivable to those who sit and enjoy his share in the performance. And woe betide the one whose attention wanders for a moment, and who plays by accident when the composer does not intend him to play! No one need punish him. He has punished himself. The conductor, the whole of the other members of the orchestra and every eye in the audience seem to have suddenly discovered his existence. Altogether it must be the most nervous and exhausting of the three branches of our beautiful instrument to be an orchestral player.

GUILHERMINA SUGGIA.



GUILHERMINA, AGED 7, AND HER SISTER VIRGINIA



## MOZART AND THE EUROPE OF HIS DAY

### I.

IN 1914, just before the war broke out, there was published in Germany the first complete edition of the correspondence of the Mozart family, which extends over a period of more than thirty years in the middle of the 18th century. It was admirably edited, with all the patience and accuracy which Germans know how to bestow on a valuable work like this, by Dr. Ludwig Schiedermair of Bonn. It occupies four volumes excellently printed on good paper by Georg Müller of Munich and Leipzig; and a fifth volume contains an iconography, i.e. reproductions of portraits of the family and their friends, and pictures of many interesting objects connected with their memory.

We have now in four volumes all the extant letters of the composer himself, his father, mother, sister, and wife.

It is true that the events of Mozart's life have long been known from these letters, the most important of which were thoroughly sifted by Otto Jahn for his great biography. But the appearance of a complete collection gives all students of Mozart's life and music the chance of examining them independently of the conclusions of Jahn, interesting and valuable as these always are. It is a wonderful family record. The Mozarts always stood a little apart from society at Salzburg, lived among themselves with ardent interest in each others' lives, and seem by a curious instinct to have kept every letter that could possibly help a future biographer or critic. The father meant himself to write an account of his son's early life, and must have requested his friend Hagenauer to keep all his letters written while he was travelling with his two children in France, England and Holland. So, too, the youthful genius himself, even in his most rebellious time, kept all his father's letters religiously, though they were sometimes so long and overburdened with advice and remonstrance that in these days they would assuredly have found their way into the fire. The result of it all is that we have an unparalleled opportunity of tracing the growth and character of one of the most astonishing geniuses that ever



lived; a steady musical growth, passing through many phases,\* and a character always interesting, because its strong points are set in such piquant relation to the weak ones.

The letters both of father and son, and especially the father, are often concerned with commonplace men and music, with such trifling matters as ailments and their remedies, money and expenditure. And they very rarely show any literary power; only now and again are we allowed to see into the musical mind of the son, when his power of expression rises with the strength of his feeling. The father's letters are often wearisome, and need some little knowledge of South German or Swiss patois to follow easily. But I am heartily glad to find that the editor has let them stand in their original form of spelling and contraction, and that all the fun and frolic of the son in his younger years is printed exactly as he left it.

While reading or re-reading these letters I am more than ever struck by the interest of Mozart's short life taken in relation to the events and personalities of his age. It is true that he seems to live quite outside of history, and rarely to trouble himself about its making. But he unconsciously played a part, and not a contemptible part, in the movements that were going on behind the scenes. The Holy Roman Empire was tottering, and the selfish pomp and tyranny of dynasties were being displayed for almost the last time; but long before the French Revolution put a stop to them, Europe was secretly being educated for better things. Individuals were beginning to assert themselves here and there, in spite of the feudal fetters which cramped their energies, and one of these, strange to say, was the youthful genius of Salzburg. In doing so he unluckily came into conflict, not only with the priestly tyranny against which he rebelled, but with the mild and affectionate sway of his own beloved father, a prudent devotee of the old order of things.

Of course the main interest of Mozart's life will always be the strangely early appearance of his genius, and its steady and almost uninterrupted growth. Yet the mere historical setting of his short life of less than thirty-six years is worth more attention than most of us pay it. There was hardly a city of importance in Central Europe and Italy which he had not visited; there were few prominent figures in the Europe of that day with whom he had not come at least into momentary contact. Had he been a keen observer of men and manners, he might have left memoirs of some historical

\* This development has been of late most carefully studied by Messrs. Wyzewa and Saint-Foix in their work "W. A. Mozart. Sa vie musicale et son oeuvre, de l'enfance à la pleine maturité. Paris, 1912."

interest. But he was never a man of the world, though he loved the world's society; from first to last, as he said himself, his mind was wholly absorbed in music. In a worldly point of view his travels and his experience availed him nothing. None of the great personages, none of the great cities that he visited, did anything substantial or permanent for him, and he died in 1791 in poverty and comparative neglect. The myth is not yet quite extinct that he was 'a dapper little court composer'; the truth is that he was not a *persona grata* with the high aristocracy, and in Germany the success of an artist depended almost entirely on aristocratic support. Haydn, it may be said, was always welcome in aristocratic circles, though he was actually the son of a Croatian peasant. But Papa Haydn was a very different type of man from his youthful friend and admirer; he was shrewd, quiet, and deferential; Mozart, when music was concerned, was never deferential to any one but the very few musicians whom he recognized as genuine and friendly. He was in fact a rebel and a self-confident one and, worst of all in the eyes of the nobles, he was *bourgeois*.

He was born at Salzburg in the first year (1756) of that terrible and needless struggle the Seven Years' war, which was to exhaust Austria and Prussia, and to some extent also France. Salzburg was fortunately well removed from the operations of armies. That picturesque town looked rather southwards towards Italy than northwards towards Germany, and though its inhabitants spoke and speak a German patois, of which Mozart himself has left us some specimens in his letters to his sister from Italy, it had always been too closely connected with the Roman Church to be a city of true German feeling. It was the seat of a great feudai archbishopric; it was ruled by ecclesiastics who kept a pompous court, and employed a number of officials, stewards, lackeys, and musicians. Mozart's father, Leopold, the son of a bookbinder in Augsburg, had found a place here in 1743 as a musician in the Archbishop's service, and later on became court composer and director of the orchestra; his Catholic orthodoxy, devotion to duty, and great distinction as a violinist ensured him success at Salzburg, and in the year in which his son was born he published a work which gained him renown in all the musical circles of Europe, the famous *Violinschule*, or, *Fundamental method for the Violin*. It is important to recognize the fact that the name of Mozart was already well-known in Europe when the travels of the young genius began.

In those miserable years of warfare, while Frederic and Maria Theresa were alternately triumphant and despairing, and their subjects were being slaughtered or starved, Leopold Mozart was devoting himself with his native industry and good sense to the

education of his two children. It is not likely that he cared much to which side victory inclined, except so far as the Church might suffer if the Empire met with serious disaster; he was not an Austrian born, and these were the days when all over Germany the best minds had lost the sense of patriotism. His whole mind was given to music and to his children; and in this wholeheartedness he was doubtless also aided by the fact that society in Salzburg was not entirely to his taste. Salzburgers were noted for their stupidity and boorishness, and the Mozart family had a sense of humour and a satirical vein which made them rather dangerous neighbours,—a trait which in the son's later years was not always to his advantage.

In 1762 when Wolfgang was six years old, the war was obviously coming to an end. George III and Bute had deserted Frederic; both Austria and Prussia were quite worn out. In January, Leopold took the children to Munich, where they played before the Elector of Bavaria; and in the autumn, when peace was fairly well assured, though not actually signed, he took them to Vienna. There they stayed till the following January, and became quite the fashion. Not only the weary Empress, but all the Imperial family and resident nobility needed something to divert their minds after seven years of war; the children, and especially the boy, were charmingly childish and natural as well as precocious, and the visit had its value for the patrons as well as the patronized. It may indeed have been of more profit to the Hapsburgs than to the Mozarts; for at no time in his life did the composer get any substantial help from the Imperial family; the child was a delightful plaything, but the man was a genius beyond their comprehension. They were all of them fond of music; most of them played or sang, and Joseph, who was soon to succeed to the Empire, seems to have had something like a real knowledge of at least Italian music. But they were all amateurs in every department of knowledge; they were in reality but half educated; they wanted directness in action because they were not trained to see the facts before them. This is sadly illustrated in the life of the youngest daughter of the family, Marie Antoinette, to whom our little boy took a great liking during this visit. She picked him up one day when he fell on the marble staircase at Schönbrunn, and he told her that he would marry her. Fourteen years later when he was in Paris and she was Queen of France he failed to get admission to her.

In 1763 Europe was at last at peace again, and Leopold was able to carry out an audacious plan which he had probably been nursing for some time. He determined to take his wonderful children a tour through Southern Germany, France, England and

Holland; Prussia was to be avoided, because the great Frederic was stingy and poor, and had his own stereotyped ideas about music. Audacious indeed this project was, for the girl was eleven and the boy only seven, and as we read the father's letters we feel thankful that Wolfgang escaped serious bodily and mental damage. The object of the travel was to gain money enough to put the family in such circumstances as might make the future career of the children, and especially of the boy, assured both in a worldly and an artistic sense.\* In after years Leopold used to insist on this in his letters to his son, reminding him how much he had sacrificed, how hard he had worked on that journey, for his benefit. How hard he did work may indeed be guessed from the letters to Hagenauer written during the tour to France and England, and again from those to his wife when he was with his boy in Italy. We have only to think of the difficulties of travelling in those days, of the constant forethought needed to get the necessary introductions,† of the continual anxiety about money, and the constant care of two children, to realize that this man's venture was indeed a risky one, and to wonder if it was really worth the trouble. Certain it is that in a material point of view the result did not justify the expectations; when all expenses were paid the family was not much the richer.

And it must be owned that the father, so sensible and prudent in most worldly matters was really running a serious risk with his son. He was exhibiting him as a curiosity; and it is amazing that the boy's happy temperament should have carried him through it safely. Here is an extract from an advertisement in a newspaper of August 30th, 1763: "the boy, who is not yet seven, will perform on the clavecin or harpsichord; he will also play a concerto for the violin, and will accompany symphonies on the clavier, the manual or keyboard being covered with a cloth, with as much facility as if he could see the keys; he will instantly name all notes played at a distance, whether singly or on chords on the clavier, or on any other instrument, bell, glass, or clock." We may hope that the mis-statement of the child's age, which was really seven and a half, proves that this advertisement was not penned or sanctioned by the father; but it is not the only instance of such inaccuracies in the course of this tour.

\* Writing to his son November 27th, 1777, he tells him that the object of his journey, and the necessary object, was and is, and must be to get a post of service (i.e. at some court) or to earn money. These last words are written in cypher, as was the father's frequent habit.

† On February 5th, 1778, Leopold sent his son a long list of persons of distinction at Paris to whom he had had introductions during their former visit, and most of whose addresses he had carefully noted and kept. They number in all fifty-four.



I cannot however entirely acquit Leopold in the management of this journey. It is true that he went on with his son's education, in religion and morals as well as in music and languages ; it is also true that the child remained a child, as we know from Barrington's communication to the Royal Society about him, and that some years later he was still a genuine boy of the frankest and happiest disposition. But I believe that it eventually did him harm in two ways at least ; it spread his fame as an infant phenomenon, and when he grew up as an astonishing genius, people who remembered him as a child found it hard to recast their mental attitude towards him ; in their eyes his work as a young man did not seem so different from that of other composers as to justify the exhibition that had been made of him. And I incline to think too that this continual exhibition, and the constant intercourse with great personages, gave him a certain assurance in society, which, when combined with the satirical humour of the family, was apt to make some sensitive people dislike him in after life. Not that he was in any way spoilt,—far from it ; he was always dutiful and affectionate and sincerely devoted to his father. But he became too much accustomed to being before the public ; and the desire to please the public, even when he despised it, which his father seems to have impressed on him as a duty, was never entirely shaken off in his short life. Only in his later years did the intense, unconscious yearning for self-expression neutralize the father's doctrine, and produce the true artist's power of pleasing in his own way, and in that way only.

The journey was uneventful on the whole until the party reached Paris. The boy did wonderful things at several German courts, but it was only at Frankfort that he came across any one of real note. On February 3rd, 1830, Goethe told Eckermann that he himself, as a boy of 14, had seen the child at a concert at Frankfort, and perfectly well remembered the little fellow with his powdered wig and his sword. A year later Eckermann reports a remark of Goethe's on the early development of this genius : "A phenomenon like that of Mozart remains an inexplicable thing. But how would the Divinity find everywhere opportunity to do wonders if he did not sometimes try his powers on extraordinary individuals, at whom we stand astonished, and cannot understand whence they come ?" He always thought of Mozart as the greatest of composers ; what moved him was no doubt that perfect sanity and purity of form and expression in which he comes nearer to the Greek ideal of art than any other composer. Whether Goethe knew that Mozart lived long enough to set a single song of his to music, and so to set it that no other musician has ventured to lay hands on it again, I do not know. Their lives and work touch only in that evening at





W. A. MOZART.

nach dem in Verona 1770 gemalten Bilde.

von K. J. Schindler in Wien.

MOZART, AGED 14

PORTRAIT BY CIGNAROLI, TAKEN FROM OTTO JAHN, VOL. IV.



Frankfort, and in the words and music, both inimitable, of *Das Veilchen*.

The party reached Paris in November. Here they had an introduction to a remarkable man, whose kindness to the family then, and to the son many years later, deserves our own gratitude. This was Grimm, the intimate friend of Diderot and others of the staff of the Encyclopædia, sharing with them a great variety of interests, literary, scientific, artistic; "the most French of all the Germans"; not yet the considerable figure in Europe that he became later, as literary correspondent of sovereigns, ambassador, and Baron, but already a man of influence in Paris. He was able to introduce the family at Versailles, and to help them in so many ways that Leopold wrote home that all the introductions they had were as nothing in comparison with that to Grimm, which had been given them quite by chance at Frankfort. The best account of him in English is in Lord Morley's volume on Rousseau, where, however, he is perhaps a little too hardly judged. Rousseau hated him, and they quarrelled; Grimm found a much more congenial friend in the more practicable and reasonable Diderot. We may guess that Grimm and Leopold Mozart were Germans of the same prudent and practical type, and we may perhaps also divine why Wolfgang as a young man failed, like Rousseau, to please his father's old friend. Yet in an estimate of Grimm's character it should not be forgotten that twice over, at an interval of fifteen years, he exerted himself nobly to befriend the greatest musical genius of the age.

It would be interesting to know whether the family came across Diderot, who seems to have been at Paris at the time and whose infinite curiosity would naturally have prompted him to make their acquaintance. Rousseau was in retirement in Switzerland, Voltaire at Ferney; and we have to be content with the father's account of a visit to Versailles, and of patronage by personages much less worthy of note. Of these by far the most prominent was Madame de Pompadour, whose mischievous life ended soon afterwards. The prudent Leopold showed no disinclination to meet her, in spite of his strict principles; he notes in fact that she had a remarkable mind. But the little boy took a dislike to her, for she pushed him away when he proposed to kiss her, he who had been kissed by the Empress! So his sister told the story in later years.

The Mozart family—father, mother and children—arrived in London April 23rd, 1764. They travelled with comfort in their own carriage hired from Paris, and in a ship which they hired for five *louis d'or*, because the packet was full. They had two servants and an experienced courier, and but for expense, of which the

father complains bitterly, they seem to have had a pleasant journey. In London they established themselves in Cecil Court, off St. Martin's Lane, in a neighbourhood then much affected by artists and musicians. They remained in England, and chiefly in London for fifteen months, and left it on August 1st, 1765. It is hard to realize that this great musician was so long among us; that as a child he spoke English after some fashion,\* played with English children, and was a well-known little figure in London society; it is harder still to realize that but for his early death we should probably have had him among us again. He always wished to see England once more; and that he would have been definitely invited, like Haydn, for the Salaman concerts, there can hardly be a doubt.

Considering their long residence in London, there is curiously little of real interest recorded in Leopold's letters. Burney, by far the shrewdest musical critic of that day, alludes more than once to the boy's astonishing precocity, but does not give us such details as we should wish for. Burney was not as yet occupying the house in St. Martin's Street famous as the residence of Sir Isaac Newton, or he would have been close to the Mozart family, and might have made a permanent friend of Leopold. I am inclined to think that there must have been some kind of incompatibility between the two; for when they met again in Italy, Burney has little to say of a man who might have been of considerable use to him, and Leopold has nothing whatever to say of the Doctor. To the end of his life Burney failed to realize the greatness of Mozart's genius. Haydn he did eventually recognize as great; but in 1764 Haydn had not as yet written anything on a large scale.

The most valuable and interesting record of the boy's talent is that of Daines Barrington, communicated to the Royal Society, which has often been quoted, and may be read by anyone who will take the trouble to look up the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1765. Barrington was a noteworthy individual in two ways; he was the correspondent of Gilbert White of Selborne, and will be remembered as such while English literature lasts; he was also curious about all strange phenomena, and among these was this extraordinary child. A careful reading of his evidence makes it clear that in the rapid development of the musical mind there was not so much a growth of abnormal inventive power as of the faculty of assimilating all that was best in the existing forms of music. The truly astonishing thing is the fact that the inventive power,

\* His sister, who had a dangerous illness afterwards at the Hague, spoke in her delirium English and French as well as German. See *Letters*, vol. 4, p. 250 (Leopold to Hagenauer).

with a strong emotional force, did eventually come, in spite of what may seem to us an unnatural process of development.

Young George the Third and his Queen summoned the family within two days of their arrival, and continued to befriend them for a while, and England seemed likely to prove a mine of wealth. But after a time the charm began to fail, and we read with some dismay of the father's efforts to make money by exhibiting his children as curiosities. He felt when he finally left England that he had already stayed too long. One really valuable musical friend had been made, and one only; this was J. C. Bach, youngest son of the great Sebastian, who was kind to the child and was never forgotten by him. In 1778 they met again in Paris, and Wolfgang wrote to his father with enthusiasm of the meeting: "You can easily imagine the joy, mine and his, when we saw each other again. Perhaps his joy is not like mine, but he is an honourable man and does justice by all. You know well that I love him and respect him with all my heart, and he does not flatter me like others, but honestly praises me to others and to my face." The English Bach, as he was called, was indeed not only a real musician, but a man of sterling character,—one whom it was good for the family to know; his honest face may now be seen, reproduced from the picture in the Royal Library of Berlin, on page 111 of Dr. Schiedermair's *Iconography*.

After a night spent at Canterbury, and a few days at the country house of Sir Horace Mann the friend of Horace Walpole, the family crossed the sea once more, and after spending some time in the Low Countries, finished their long tour by way of Lyons, Geneva and Switzerland, reaching Salzburg in November, 1766.

Before a year was out the whole family was again travelling. This time they went to Vienna and remained there more than a year. But the venture was unfortunate: small-pox was prevalent, the children caught it on their journey, and might have died but for the extraordinary kindness of Count Podstatzky, who was a Canon of Salzburg and known to Leopold. The boy lay blind for nine days; perhaps we owe more than we can estimate to the christian goodness of this man, whose name must never be forgotten. Who in these days would be ready to take infected children into his house and see them safely through such a malady?

The court of Vienna was also suffering from the epidemic; the Empress lost more than one child, and seems to have caught the disease herself. Her great minister the famous Count Kaunitz, though devoted to music, would not admit the boy to his presence until all traces of the small-pox had vanished. They went indeed to court, introduced by the Emperor Joseph II, but they made but



little profit, and Leopold complains of the trifling and treachery of the Viennese. They did however make the acquaintance of one really great musician, Gluck himself, who failed to see the genius of the twelve-year-old boy; he was cold about the opera *La Finta Semplice*, written in Vienna, of course in the prevalent Italian style. Gluck was at this very time transforming the opera in his own way, was full of those ideas which he expressed in the Preface to the published edition of *Alceste*, and no blame need be attached to him. It may be that Leopold was too importunate, too much wrapped up in his son's talent, to be very welcome to the somewhat unsociable Gluck,—too much devoted to Italian methods to appreciate the force of Gluck's theory of dramatic music. Only in his old age did Gluck come to appreciate the rising genius; in the days of *Figaro* he showed him both kindness and hospitality. But as musical dramatists they held different views always; Gluck was convinced that in the drama music should only be a help to the action, while for Mozart it was the primary and essential thing in the drama, the expression of the life and character portrayed. It has been well said of Gluck that he is not at his best when he acts logically on his theory.

*La Finta Semplice* was intrigued out of the Opera house, in spite of the kindly efforts of Hasse, the other famous composer whom they met here: a man without real genius but a kindly liberal soul, always ready to help young composers and better aware of the true value of his own works than the musical world of his day. They returned to Salzburg at the end of 1768, where the opera was privately performed before the Archbishop, who gave the boy as a reward the appointment of Concertmeister.

The Italian journeys of 1770—1772 are to us far more interesting than any earlier ones, for the child-prodigy has grown into a bright boy of fourteen, whose letters, written to his sister at home show him to us as his nature really was,—cheerful, simple-hearted, fun-loving, clever. It was a very happy time for both father and son, and the unclouded mutual love and confidence of the pair were as bright as the Italian sky above them. These boyish letters go far to explain the music of his later years, though not perhaps of his latest: the pure enjoyment of life, the tenderness of touch, the wealth of musical bloom in life's early spring. For in contrast with the ordinary composers of the day this boy now begins to put himself into his music, just as he unconsciously put himself into these delightful scraps of letters. To him, alone among all the music-writers of the day but Joseph Haydn, it was given to express his soul in music because he could not help it; all the love, joy, sorrow of his short life are to be found in his music; only when he



W. A. MOZART, AGED 14

FROM A PAINTING BY BATTONI AT ROME IN 1770



wrote in a hurry to order (and not indeed always then) do we ever feel that what he writes could have been written by any other.

If any one would prove the truth of this, let him read Dr. Burney's travels in Italy of this same year 1770, and then look at any fragments of the work of even the best composers of the day, such as Hasse and Jomelli, on which he may be able to lay his hands. Every one in Italy with any pretension to musical knowledge was writing music: writing it, not because he could not help it, but for a living if he were a professional, if he were a dilettante because it was the fashion. Hardly any of this music was published,—there was not a music-shop in all Italy, Burney tells us. The amateur piled his works on his own shelf, to be given away or copied by admirers: the opera or mass of the professional was performed once and again and then forgotten. The music produced under such conditions by men like Hasse and Jomelli was creditable, sometimes good, but in no sense an expression of human life, of human feeling. It was verse, not poetry, and like verse, it could be turned out in any quantity at any time. This music satisfied Burney as a rule; he had as yet but little inkling of what was to come in the way of musical expression; that it did not satisfy Wolfgang is clear, for he never has an enthusiastic word for it in these letters. No rival composer ever roused him to enthusiasm but Joseph Haydn, precisely because no other had the secret of expressing human feeling. The two were to each other as springs in a dry ground. No one can read these letters, trifling and boyish as they are, without feeling that we see in them a genuine, sunny, vivid nature, that can never be spoilt by fashion or withered by convention; quite healthy and happy, quite sound and true; if it be destined to speak to the world in music, it will tell its tale with perfect candour, revealing (though only to those minds that ring true to it), all its love and gaiety, all its tenderness and pathos.

The impression we gain from these letters is entirely confirmed by two portraits of the boy which were painted at this time in Italy. One of these, the earlier of the two, is the work of an eminent Roman artist, P. Battoni, and is quite the most beautiful of all the Mozart portraits that survive. It gives the impression of a sweet-tempered and animated boy of fourteen; the bright eyes set well apart, the mouth mobile, the nose rather long, as it always was. The boy's hair is long and tied with a ribbon behind; he holds in his right hand a large roll of music-paper. This portrait, which is the work of a master, is now in Scotland. The other portrait, by one Cignaroli, appears at first sight very different, because the hair has been treated by a *friseur* like that of a grown man, which makes the boy look older and more self-confident; I think that Battoni

must have insisted on having his opportunity of painting the long and partly curling locks of a genuine boy with no pretension to manhood. In both portraits the eyes look straight at you with perfect trust and honesty, but in Cignaroli's the self-confidence is possibly a little too marked. I am inclined to think that there are signs that in the next two or three years this self-confidence might become a serious defect.

There were no famous men in Italy in those days, either political, literary, or musical, whom I need mention here, except Padre Martini the learned contrapuntist of Bologna, of whom Burney has given an interesting account in his Italian travels. He was kindly as well as learned; and though he could give Wolfgang no help in the development of his real genius, any more than other Italians of the time, he seems to have impressed him with the conviction that he had still much to learn, and some exercises still exist which may have been written under his supervision. For Martini Mozart always retained a deep respect; and in 1776 he wrote an Italian letter to him from Salzburg in affectionate terms, sending him a motet and a portrait of himself, in which I find these words: "Oh quante e quante volte desidero d'esser piu vicino per poter parlar e ragionar con Vostra Paternità molto reverenda."

Good friends there were besides Martini, and it is to the credit of the Italians that they fully recognized the genius of two young foreigners who were among them; for Burney notes that the little Mozart and the little Linley, who became firm friends while they were together, were praised all over Italy as the rising geniuses of the day. The Pope (Clement XIV) knighted the boy, to his father's intense delight, and it was only when the son had shaken himself fairly free of paternal control that he yielded to his natural good sense and abandoned the empty title "Il Cavaliere." Count Firmian, the accomplished Governor-General of Austrian Lombardy, did all he could for the pair in Milan, where the boy's opera *Mitridate*, and on two successive visits *Ascanio in Alba* and *Il Sogno di Scipione*, were produced with success.

But the boy was over-writing himself. His fingers, he often complained, were quite tired out; and this may be the origin of his great dislike in later life to the wearisome task of musical penmanship. He was in danger of becoming, like the ordinary Italian, a musical writer instead of a musical thinker, a journalist instead of a poet. It was good for him to be at home again free from excitement and fatigue.

W. WARDE FOWLER.

*To be continued.*



## THE FUTURE OF THE ENGLISH SONG

### II. THE SINGER AND THE COMPOSER.

THE first part of this article dealt with the English song in its political and commercial aspect. It showed that the song, the only potential financial asset to all intents and purposes which the young composer possesses, is moving in a vicious circle with money greasing the wheels. It is going round and round like smoke under a tumbler, with little puffs escaping now and then and darting off into the blue. It showed also—and this is the point of the article—that the control lies with the singer and the solution is in his hands.

If there is to be a future for the song-composer, he cannot know too much of his interpreter, of his powers and his prejudices and, above all, of his limitations. The older song-writers have little to learn of the tricks of the trade. They have heard (and seen) interpretation in all its forms and aspects, and know what to do and what to avoid. But the future is in the hands of their children who have not jostled in a crowd long enough to know a detective from a pickpocket. Whatever advice the singer can give to them is not a reflection on their limitations but a confession of his own. Nor is it any revolt against modernism or a clinging to old schools of thought. The travelled interpreter is athirst for new ideas and looks to the newcomer as a potential goldmine. He has simply found from experience that in his branch of the art there are certain things which he has learned to avoid, certain laws which are inevitable, certain rules to obey, all founded upon nature and therefore undefeatable by man; and he would fain share his knowledge with his colleague for the benefit of both.

Sir Charles Stanford in his book, *Musical Composition*, has told us that of all branches of the art song-writing is the most difficult. (Ye gods and little fishes and royalty-balladmongers!) At first sight this seems incredible. It is the form of music in which the amateur dabbler makes his start, as the professional singer knows to his cost. It seems constitutionally designed for the beginner, who would shy across the road at a string-quartet, but would never prick an ear at a song. And yet it is easy to see why that is true.

The song is a miniature ; it is all over in a minute or two. There is no time for an audience to recover, to forget or forgive. Only the expert can put his finger on the bare patches in a symphony ; they slip from the memory when they are past, and are swallowed up in the whole. But the false quantity, musical or literary, in the song hits even the unintelligent listener in the face and leaves a bruise that tingles. It is probably not realised that the average time-duration of a song is about two minutes. Vaughan Williams's "Silent Noon," for instance, one of the greatest English songs, though quite slow in *tempo* lasts only three minutes and forty-five seconds. Stanford's "Fairy Lough," marked *Andante mollo tranquillo* with three verses of eight lines each, lasts three minutes. Schubert's "Litanei" (three verses), probably the slowest strophic song in existence, takes no more than five minutes in all ; while the quicker songs such as Ernest Walker's "Corinna's going a-maying," three verses of fourteen lines each, and the old Irish "Quick ! we have but a second," two verses of twelve lines each, take respectively one minute fifty seconds and twenty-nine seconds.

What space is there in any of these to cover up your tracks if you go wrong, what chance for the audience to forget ? You could have forgiven it in the great C major symphony, if Schubert had asked it of you, but one falter in the "Doppelgänger" would have ruined it for ever. There is no free-board in the song ; it is concentrated art *in excelsis*. Both composer and singer are bound by these honourable fetters, but the latter has to sing the written notes and no matter how enterprising he may be he cannot appreciably vary his text, or make a silk purse out of a sow's ear if that be the material offered him. It should be remembered to the singer, in mitigation of damages, that he is a diamond-cutter not a quarryman, a miniature-painter not a "scenic artist," and that one fault spoils the whole for good and all ; for the song once sung is done with.

Sir Charles Stanford has also given us directions from the composer's point of view as to the things to bear in mind in song-writing. They apply to the art-song of any period.

Here they are, condensed into the smallest possible space :—

- (1) Declaim your poem, silently or out loud.
- (2) Find out the lines which give the central idea and settle on the atmosphere.
- (3) Get a good voice part and a good bass ; the middle is texture and trimmings, though very important ones.
- (4) Write in one (not several) *tessitura*.
- (5) Study your voice as carefully as a clarinet. The rest is on the knees of the gods.

Of these one, No. 5, is vital to the interpreter. There could not be a better parallel than that of voice and the clarinet. *Both*—and let the song-composer bear it always in mind—are *horizontal melodic instruments, the tendency of which is ever to move forward*.

The singer has two great privileges:—

- (1) He has a definite melody to sing.
- (2) He has the special gift, all his own, of words to sing it with.

The more modern we become, and the further we advance, the more the composer remembers the second of these privileges and forgets the first. This does not imply that the composer cannot, if he will, write just as beautiful melody as his forbears; but it is the age of colour as opposed to form, of harmony as opposed to melody, of the vertical as opposed to the horizontal, and when you change your direction in the line of movement in the voice, that movement gradually ceases, the heart-beats fail, and singer and song die. The classic writers treated the voice as an instrument capable of perfect phrasing, with the extra power of speech to distinguish it from its fellows. The younger generation, in its natural desire to make the song a living, vivid, illustrative drama, forgets that the very life of singing is forward horizontal movement. That is why folk-song has lived from time immemorial. Change that movement to the vertical, or harmonic, and your voice loses its special hereditary function; it becomes simply an instrument of colour with words alone to give it a slight place of pre-eminence in the atmospheric scheme. It is already used to hum accompaniments—a cheap and *ad captandum* effect. Mr. Percy Grainger in a "Sentimentals" (*sic*) entitled "Colonial Song," produced at the Torquay Festival in 1914, even went so far as to give actual instructions to the chorus to sing the masterpiece to "Padaba" or "Tiribidi" or any Italian syllables that proved convenient to the singers. Needless to say that humorous and British band of brothers, (according to the *Times*) "in their embarrassment at the riches thus proffered them, compromised upon 'Ah'." This is a foretaste of what may be to come, and the singer need not be surprised if one day he is asked to divest himself of his chief privilege, and hum or groan or shout a pictorial *scena* with orchestra.

The ultra-modern composer has his own point of view, and he is clearly entitled to it. He says:—"To me atmosphere and colour are everything; for me your human voice, like the clarinet you speak of, is in very truth but one of the many colour-instruments which help to make up my picture. To use it in the old-fashioned way would cripple me just as much as strict obedience to the old rules of form and counterpoint." He is, as said before, quite en-

titled to that opinion ; we have simply got to see how it works out. The clarinet as an orchestral instrument may be used vertically and harmonically for the general colour-effect. But if you promote it to the rank of a soloist it reverts to its natural tendencies—horizontal continuous melody. You have only to isolate it, with the pianoforte as sole companion, to realise that fundamental truth.

Nature revolts against the misapplication of her gifts. If she trains us up for centuries to run upon our feet, she will not allow us to travel fast or far upon our hands and knees. The latter method of progress may be new and give the spectators a new sensation, but it is *not natural* and it does *not move*, and the musical phrase has motion inherent in it and moves ever irresistibly forward. You will find, if you examine closely, or listen attentively to, the ultra-modern song in which atmosphere and colour have been exalted to pre-eminence at the expense of all else, that the vocal sentences have become short, that they have lost their individuality and become merged in the general scheme, that their limbs have become truncated, and that they are clumping about on stumps, crippled.

Such misapplications of the functions of the human voice simply defeat their own ends. It is not a matter of brains or enterprise ; it is an elemental law of nature. For the same reason a song must have a beginning and an end. Like an aeroplane or a golf-ball it must take off and land again in order to be of any use. That is as inevitable as life and death. Yet many a young composer in the search for the *aliquid novi* has tried to cheat the grave. His forbears have come to a full-close, so he will remain in the air. If that be the atmosphere of the song, well and good. If not, he paints his picture wrong and is false to his very subject. There is nothing to be ashamed of in death—the song must die as surely as it was born. It is the way of all flesh. Faust put it off for a while, but the devil got him in the end. Audiences, too, like their minds made up for them ; the song that leaves them “guessing” is not asked for again.

It is an incontrovertible fact, known to every singer of experience, that the success or failure of a song depends on how it ends ; it is the inevitable complement of the miniature-form. It may be a masterpiece of melody or illustrative drama so far, but if the end is weak the song will have gone for nothing. Many of the modern French composers seem incapable of ending a song. They grope about searching for something out of the ordinary and in trying to avoid the commonplace, wilt away *clamantes in vacuo*. There are many songs of this school which just fail to be masterpieces because their authors look upon a full-close as an unclean thing. The



British ballad-monger has learned that lesson at any rate. The merciful tonic after the apoplectic dominant instead of destroying him has saved his bastard life again and again.

Song, being dependent for its existence on forward movement, hates to be stopped. Rhythm is its very soul. Time is the policeman who keeps order in the traffic, rhythm is the traffic itself. The sensations of the song that is constantly held up by pauses are exactly akin to those of the traveller from Knightsbridge to Euston, hurrying to catch his train, who is stopped at Hyde Park Corner, Hamilton Place, Berkeley Street, Bond Street and Piccadilly Circus. Pauses suck the life-blood from a song. There are only two kinds of pauses which are its friends,—those which directly illustrate the text, and those which hold up the rhythm in *rubato* to make the *tempo primo* more fascinating when it comes. *Fermatas* on high notes are dangerous. The good interpreter makes them by instinct when they are right. If they catch the eye of the cheap-jack he will double and treble their values. Ninety-nine songs out of a hundred have one point of climax; every extra *fermata* adds another one. The royalty ballad is bespattered with them; this should be warning enough.

Such songs have as often as not a *fermata* both on the penultimate and ante-penultimate notes of the last (or each) verse. Such wallowings in vocal tone are an insult to our sense of refinement; they are on all fours with the duplicated *portamento*, the hall-mark of the British contralto. They are even to be found in some so-called "Editions" of the classics, superimposed upon Handel's text, to give the singer a chance. It is possible to conceive a situation where they may have a definite legitimate purpose—to crush and crush again, to pause on successive landings, to call and hear an echo, and so on; but such pauses are dramatic and recognisable at once as appropriate. Where they occur in pure singing, as at the end of Veuillermoz' beautiful "Jardin d'amour" they are, in the light of the composer's masterly handling of the rest of the song, frankly inexplicable to the musician, and out of the picture with the flowing melody. The *fermata* gives the impression of mass. The Bach Chorales are a case in point. Sung congregationally the *fermatas* have a "himmlische Länge" which our emotions could never find too long; transplant them to the solo voice and give them the same time-duration, and we should begin to fidget before we were half way through.

Closely allied to the pause is the interpolated recitative. Not the recitative with a purpose, as in Vaughan Williams' "Silent Noon" which calls your dreamy eye away to the blue dragon-fly; or the descriptive opening of Parry's "Fairy Town"; or the



primitive simplicity of the accompanied quasi-recitative of Stanford's "Grandeur"; or the song written in definite recitative form; but the recitative *faute de mieux*, the recitative of despair where the composer has got hung up in the forward movement of the song. The interpreter recognises the lack of invention and resents it as a stop-gap. It means that the road is up once more and he has got to pull up and go round.

Here again the modern French school should give us warning. Many of its songs are patchworks of short melodic vocal phrases alternating with recitative, with symphonic interludes between each. The idea is to give the literary sense of the poem in a form that is intelligible and true, and trust to the pianoforte part to save the song from being purely declamatory. This town-crier aspect of the singer's art is a poor one. Singing is added to poetry to make the song, the perfect whole, more beautiful than either part alone; the poem loses far more than it gains by limiting its partner to explanatory demonstration. The style referred to has however one merit: it is easy. It requires no training to speak of. Sustained melodic singing is only possible to the man who has thoroughly learnt his business; any singer with a voice can make a shot at the recitative song if he is a musician. It has the disadvantage on the other hand of limiting the scope of his tone-colour. Recitative ranges mostly between declamation and *parlato*, and in its *secco* form was used in old days chiefly for covering the ground; one cannot but feel that it has a similar object in many of these songs.

Again, only the man with a compelling sense of rhythm can be trusted to keep recitative on the move. Its tendency is ever to pause to narrate or ruminate, and before it knows where it is it finds itself beside the *fermata* in front of the fire with its feet on the chimney-piece. The recitative form can be one of the most moving things in music—*vide* the Cesar Franck violin sonata—but when it is used *ad nauseam* as a means of conveying the sense of the literary text, the singer's stomach revolts against it. The recitative-song is the eunuch of musical literature.

The same applies to the "filling-in" accompaniment between the vocal phrases, the *arpeggio* or similar device, which embodies no idea, develops no figure and enhances no word. It carries on the rhythm it is true, but its inherent weakness makes the interpreter impatient. It fidgets him and makes him want to hurry on. It is however not often met with in the modern art-song.

The human voice is human and subject to human frailties. It has no arbitrary intervals or strings upon which you can put your finger. Few singers have absolute pitch, and it is a doubtful

blessing at best. The tendency of the voice, like all other things, is to follow the line of least resistance, and if it is thrown into the middle of a bundle of discords it will instinctively feel its way out through the one that shows a prospect of resolution. It is not a case of musicianship; it is a physical tendency. The disregard of this fact will actually hurt the composition, for the singer in the effort to attain accuracy will have to sacrifice spontaneity, and that means a jar to interpretation.

Consonants are the singer's weapons of attack. They are the percussion of his orchestra; the vowels are the wind; (strings represent both, in their combined power of accent and *sostenuto*). For the sake of his effects, therefore, the composer should put his declamatory accents on the former and his sustained notes upon the latter. Consonants set the rhythm, vowels carry the tune. It is a mistake to imagine that high notes and climaxes should be upon open vowels. All vowels should be alike to the singer's technique; the literary and musical climaxes should coincide, and be the only thing that should count.

The middle and lower registers of the voice are conversational. The larger effects of force should lie high, where there is muscular power to reinforce them. In this connection the composer should bear in mind the reference to *tessitura* in Sir Charles Stanford's rule No. 4 above. Five-sixths of his song should, both for his own and the singer's sake, be written in the middle part of the voice. The singer cannot physically sustain a *tessitura* in the upper register, and, in addition, there will be no reserve for the climax when it comes.

The faster a song goes, the closer it returns to speech. You can sing a song to definite notes as quickly as you can speak it, but it has by then resolved itself into musical diction. The composer must not expect either sustained sound or great beauty of tone in the quick song. It is carried on the consonants, and the vowels are proportionately diminished in value.

Rhythm is the soul of song, and sustained sounds are the soul of the voice. The danger of over-dramatisation of words is that that soul of the voice may be sacrificed to materialism. Let us, for purposes of illustration, put into juxtaposition two such songs as Ravel's "*Martin-pêcheur*" and Guy Ropartz' "*Berceuse*," both masterpieces in their way, though wide as the poles apart. The first is technically vocal speech, in the form of recitative; it is a definite recitative-song but does not belong to the class condemned above. The speaker (who is evidently not a dry-fly fisherman) is fascinated by the apparition of the kingfisher sitting on the end of his rod. He is so fearful of frightening it, that he holds his breath.

JULES RENAUD.

MAURICE RAVEL.

*On ne peut plus lent.*

CHANT. *Ça n'a pas mor-*

PIANO. *pp*

*du, ce soir, mais je rap - porte une rare é - mo - tion.*

*ppp*

HIPPOLYTE LUCAS.

J. GUY ROPARTEZ.

*Assez lent.*

PIANO. *mf*

*p*

*pp*

*O pe - tits en - fanta, voi - ci l'heure Où tout bruit cesse en la de - meure.....*

He cannot therefore sustain. What he says, he says to himself under his breath in a mental whisper. The effect is *bizarre*; his thoughts are entirely of the situation, not of the little blue bird. If you took the music as applying to the bird you would think not of the flaming streak of blue but of the ancient and fishlike smell of its home. The "Berceuse" on the other hand, as its name implies, is pure continuous melody, so simple and straightforward that the modernist would spurn it as baby-food. Yet from the vocal point of view it has all the essentials which the other lacks—rhythm, sustained vowel sounds, points of climax, pure phrasing and melodic beauty. It is singing; the other is musical diction. There is no intention here to exalt either at the expense of the other. Each has its proper place in a programme; but the first has nothing to do with physical singing, the second is pure singing personified. They have been chosen as examples merely to avoid invidious comparisons at home.

If the voice claims to be a musical instrument like the others, it cannot claim immunity from the ordinary laws of music. It does not. It has one precious privilege—the gift of language. In every other respect it obeys the same laws as the clarinet or the violin or the harp. It is a generous belief on the part of the composer that that gift of language confers some divine right upon its possessor. It does not. Ninety-five songs out of a hundred are pure music, and nothing else. When they leave that domain, they turn to declamation.

There is no such thing as direct imitation in real music outside the toy-symphony; yet illustration is the complement to imagination. Illustration in the song should as a rule, be in the accompaniment rather than in the voice; the voice should make its effects with diction, tone and colour. There is an overpowering temptation to the singer to show off his paces under the spur of music; but music is in reality a mighty magnifying-glass and under its lens the obvious becomes grotesque and offends the senses like the lines of a child's hand under the microscope. This is particularly true of humorous songs. Direct illustration in the voice-part in humorous songs is grinning through a horse-collar.

The mechanical vocabulary of musical imagery in the song for voice and pianoforte is a limited one. The ordinary *arpeggio*, for instance, does duty for the plucking of the strings in Brahms' "Ständchen," for the swath of the mower in Hamilton Harty's "Scythe Song" and for the swaying of the tree-tops in Somervell's "Birds in the high Hall-garden." Yet it is vividly illustrative in each. If the main purpose of musical illustration were to give infallible demonstration to the hearer, the composer would at once



ally himself with the inventor in order to widen the field of his medium of expression. But musical imagery can never be directly demonstrative and remain poetical; its virtue lies in suggestion, in its undefined appeal to the emotions and its impulse to imagination. The big drum and cymbals, the triangle and glockenspiel, are about as near as we can get to realism even in the orchestra without a sense of prostituting art and stifling mental initiative at one and the same time. Over-dramatising robs the mind of imagination, and when that is gone music is no more. It must be remembered too that the singer dominates the scene in the eye of the audience and if his share of drama be made too prominent the attention of that audience will be switched on to his personality at the expense of that holy alliance which begets the perfect song. It is the balance of this partnership which makes a masterpiece of Schubert's "Leiermann," or Stanford's "Fairy Lough." In each the voice adumbrates the atmosphere, the pianoforte suggests the illustration. In the former the ear is fascinated by the drone and wheeze of the hurdy-gurdy, while the mind is saturated with the sense of dreariness and futility. In the latter the senses assimilate in turn the rustle of the reeds, the *berceuse* of the sea-gulls, the call of the curlew, the little waves that run up the shore and back again, and the hoof-beats of the fairy horsemen that come to tell of the dawn, while the mind absorbs the mystical atmosphere of the little green island in the middle of the little black lake that lies so high among the heather—"an' no-one there to see." Had Schubert emphasised his recitative or Stanford dotted the i's of his imagery, the hearer would have taken his field-glass to the Leiermann and gone for his fairies to the reservoir on Campden Hill.

There are many things which look all right, or even brilliant, on paper, but which do not come off in public performance.

(a) Instrumental effects such as lightning—*crescendos*, or sudden *pianos* alternating with sudden *fortes*; a Czecho-Slovak choir can make our senses reel with them, but in a solo voice, except for a single pictorial instant, they sound futile and ridiculous.

(b) Silent beats on the first beat of the bar in rhythmical songs. These are intelligible in the orchestral song where the conductor gives the down beat; but in the song with pianoforte accompaniment such silent beats are looked upon by the audience as pauses at the end of the previous bar and they interpret the first beat which they actually hear as the first beat of the bar, whereas it is in reality the second. This means that the rhythm is thrown out of gear for them and takes several bars to disentangle itself. The beat was clamant no doubt in the composer's brain, but it is silent to the ear of the audience, and he loses in the end more than he gains.



(c) "Splashing about" in the pianoforte part, which spoils the "miniature" aspect of song and tries the patience of the interpreter who has a sense of proportion.

(d) The apportioning of equal note-values to the individual syllables of words like "beautiful," "twenty," "comrade," "arouse," etc. It is true that here again the composer has but a limited vocabulary of note-values for dealing with quantity, and he hopes that his songs may be sung by men of intelligence, but he cannot depend upon his interpreter's having a feeling for the classics, and so long as he writes his dactyls and trochees and iambs spondaically, so long will they be sung without reference to sense or scansion. It is on the whole better to run the risk of stereotyping stress than leave it to the mercy of one who is the slave of note-values. One has only got to sing mentally the word "humble" to two minims to realise how ridiculous it can be. The above applies of course to the slower *tempi*; in the quick song note-values settle themselves.

(e) Some composers go to the other extreme and deprive the interpreter of initiative by filling their songs with alternating bars of  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{2}{4}$ ,  $\frac{3}{8}$ ,  $\frac{5}{8}$  and the like. If he writes them in this way because the spirit moves him thus well and good; the interpreter will revel in them. But if he does it in order to force his own phrasing in the form of arbitrary *rubato* on his colleague, the latter will recognise it in a moment and resent it.

This question of initiative brings us to the most important thing of all—the use and abuse of expression-marks. If one looks at the works of Bach and Schubert one finds that expression-marks are either conspicuous by their absence or put in only in the vital places; in the modern song they seem to have been shaken out of a pepper-pot. The obvious retort is that the music of the classics is instrumental in character while the modern song is a tone-picture crying out for vivid illustration. The reasoning is fallacious. The instrumental song depends for its very existence on pure phrasing, and if there is one thing more than another in which the composer should have the say it is in that very detail, seeing that phrasing is the beginning and end of the performance. But the modern song is apparently written so illustratively that he who runs may read. Its interpretation is a matter of temperament. The composer's reading of his own song need not necessarily be the only one. There are a dozen ways of interpreting a song suited to a dozen different temperaments, each one the right one for its own interpreter. There are, as a matter of fact, many cases in which the interpreter can make more out of a song than the composer knew there was in it to make. If the composer is wise he will give general directions at

the beginning as to his own idea of the song's characteristics (it is not necessary to condescend to the uneducated by translating *crescendo molto* into "louden lots"), put in his expression-marks at the moment of climax or its opposite, or at other points where they are vital, and leave the rest to his colleague. No singer who is worth his salt will take any notice of expression-marks if they do not suit him; he refuses, quite rightly, to cripple his reading. But the man who is the slave of the written note will stick to them and they to him, like birdlime. If there is to be a partnership, it must be a real one. Notes are but symbols of the idea, and imagination is nobody's slave.

Finally let him always remember that the singer's medium of expression is his breath. The pianist and the organist have their hands and their feet, specially designed by Nature, it would almost seem, for the very purpose, to deliver the message of their brain. But Nature wants the singer's medium for herself; he has to mould to his own ends the great primary force which is absorbed in keeping him alive and suffers interference ungladly. The singer who can be trusted to be always on the spot—not merely up to time, but with a box of colours in his pocket—is worthy of respect, for he has got there by will-power alone; and before he becomes an apostle he will have had to fight with the beasts at Ephesus. The royalty ballad sees to that.

The future of our song is in our own hands. So long as we tolerate a system which sees no sacrifice or want of taste in placing a trashy ballad next to a Bach suite in a Symphony concert we shall get no more than we deserve, and shall rightly earn the contempt of the foreigner. We can never defeat the royalty song until we fight it on its own ground. We have got to make the new English song so strong and withal so direct in its appeal that its rival will shrink away into the darkness to which it belongs. English music is at the spring, and it is the young man to whom we look. It is to be hoped he will not regard the suggestions made to him here in the light of the expression-marks referred to above. They are but a list of shortcomings and proclivities, gathered from experience, which he will have to reckon with when writing for his best friend.

HARRY PLUNKET GREENE.

## SOME NOTES ON PURCELL'S DRAMATIC MUSIC

WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FAIRY QUEEN

PURCELL's genius appeared at an unfortunate stage of his country's history. Whether under other circumstances he might have been reckoned among the world's great masters we cannot tell. It is useless discussing might-have-beens. Dr. Burney in his bombastic way says that "Purcell is as much the pride of an Englishman in music, as Shakespeare in production of the stage," but we know that it is not true. Purcell was no Shakespeare; his reputation does not extend beyond these shores. But we may fairly consider him unfortunate in the little chance he had of becoming more widely known. Dramatic music was then in its infancy, and it was under those conditions that the work, which of all others requires tradition at its back, had to be done. His work remains a series of extraordinarily able attempts to vivify the dry bones left after the civil war. Out of the masques and dialogues of Grabu, Draghi, and Matthew Lock, he constructed a music drama acceptable to the public here, but too essentially English to find favour elsewhere. His life was too short to enable him to establish his convention as that of the English stage. Besides Handel brought in another style of opera. He lived and died a grand experimenter, and left a reputation greater than his permanent accomplishment.

He was also very unfortunate in the poets with whom he had to do. The Restoration dramatists seem to us utterly wanting in literary judgment and decorum. Who could have believed that so great a man as Dryden would have made such a degraded pasticcio out of Shakespeare's "Tempest" as Purcell set to music? Or that any writer at all could have burdened the fairy world of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" with the addition of pantomime rallies and transformation scenes. Yet the unknown writer of the "Fairy Queen" did so, and that is what Purcell had to set. One would think he could not have been familiar with Shakespeare or he would have realized how much he lost by omitting "Where the bee sucks" and "Ye spotted snakes" and setting the stupid if not licentious words provided instead. But men of that age did

not appreciate the great poet for what he was. It was impossible that they should; they stood too near him in point of time. There was no reason why they should use more ceremony in dealing with his works than we should think necessary in reconstructing a ballad opera of Sir Henry Bishop. Thus the difficulties which the staging of the *Fairy Queen* must present, if it is to be acceptable to the literary taste of our generation, seem almost unsurmountable. Still they must be overcome, if we are to have the opportunity of judging Purcell's music fairly; for dramatic music must be heard to be appreciated. Much that looks foolish and unintelligible in the reading is admirable on the stage.

It is usually said of Purcell that he set the English language better than anyone else. Perhaps that is true. Certainly no one was more alive to the proper accents of words, or spent more trouble in finding notes to match them. But unfortunately he sometimes allowed words to act as his inspiration, and formed elaborate groups which he used even when unsuitable. Much of his work suffers also from the word-painting, which was a vice of the age. Winds blow, snakes creep, and the gods ascend in flights of semiquavers, and the result is that his recitatives are full of passages which are nothing more at best than an attempt to illustrate the text. If Purcell had done no more, he would have been no musician. It is because his music contains also the lyrical impulse, which is prepared to sacrifice everything to the call of melody, that he is great. Between these two elements, expressive setting of words and beauty of tune, there rages a perpetual struggle in dramatic music, and in no composer is this more manifest than in Purcell. Not so much in the opera so called as in the curious scenes (or "songs") which he wrote for one or more voices. The realism of the recitatives stands in broad contrast with the simplicity of the lyrical phrases. The melodies are often completed by a chain of monosyllables (no, no, or oh, oh) taking the place of words, as if the composer said—I must have rhythm even at the expense of language. The two elements are often so subtly intermingled that it is difficult to tell whether the passage is meant to be lyrical or rhetorical. The musician starts with a beautiful lyrical strain, and then the word-painter knocks it on the head with some literary ingenuity. It is these dead musical excrescences which have made much of Purcell's work impossible for performance nowadays. The Italians of that age frankly said that they could not sing it, and no wonder, as they did not know the language, which was the only key to its meaning. At the same time there is a contemporary criticism of a performance of the *S. Cæcilia* ode, which tells us that Mr. Purcell sang the "Song" "Tis Nature's Voice" (really a complicated piece of vocal de-



clamation) in such incomparable style that it was one of the most applauded numbers. Can it be that singers have lost the secret of a technique, which lay in Purcell's peculiar powers? that if we could sing them better we should understand how they came to be written? It may be so. Certainly so much of Purcell's music is wonderful, that it is a pity any part should remain impossible or unintelligible. The two recitatives "Thy hand, my Anna" and "Ye twice ten thousand Deities," still often sung, show what he could do; Burney calls the latter the finest piece of recitative in our language; and the *scena* "The Witch of Endor" for three voices remains throughout strictly practical and amazingly vivid. In the matter of style Purcell is always himself. From *Dido and Aeneas* to "From rosy bowers (the last song Mr. Purcell set, it being in his sickness)" his characteristic form of recitative remains the same, and his idiom unaltered.

In the construction of his lyrics he followed no doubt the example of the Italians as far as he knew them, in particular his favourite Stradella. In the short strains in syncopated rhythm with which he liked to make the strong contrast necessary for vigorous action, or in the simple airs of pathetic expression like "What shall I do to prove how much I love her," he looked to the tunes of the later madrigalists. Many of Morley's and Weelkes' Ballets have what we now call syncopated rhythm, and the "Aires" of Dowland and Ford contain many specimens of such simple melody, for example, "Since first I saw your face" or "Now, O now, I needs must part"; and as if acknowledging their source, Purcell frequently repeats such short eight-bar strains in chorus.

But when he wished to make longer flights he had not the traditions inherited by Bach and Handel to help him. He felt the need of a sense of unity, and sought how to get greater length and variety without losing it. One of the most obvious expedients was to repeat every strain, sometimes in a different key but without change of rhythm; in this way most of the great bass songs in the *Tempest* were made. Aware of the danger of monotony, he often follows the example of Stradella in writing the second part of the air in different time and key (major from minor). By that means he shortens the period of the first part, but does not unfortunately always prevent the ear being wearied by its repetitions.

Another way he had which was much more artistic. He set his tune on a ground-bass. There are many beautiful examples of his skill in employing this device, and it seems to suit his genius for varied expression of words. He did not often maintain the bass unchanged throughout, but took it through different keys, and often set it for a time at liberty. The use of this was that, though



unnoticed in the varying rhythm of the tune, it gave the song the unity it needed. Incidentally it taught the composer the value of phrases of different bar lengths, if he wished to vary his harmonies, and acquired a practical value in his hands which is almost unique. In other songs he gives a prevailing figure to the accompaniment, or uses a recurrent rhythmical ritornel, to bind the different parts of his air together. It seldom occurs to him to return to his opening phrase, or make it in any way the groundwork of the rest; he is too much occupied with the sequence and meaning of his words to do that. Words like "laugh," "victorious," or even "longer" will tempt him into passages which break up the flow of the song altogether. So when he writes long airs without having recourse to any artificial limitations he seldom contrives to make his tunes very convincing. Some of them, like "By the croaking of the toad," are very dramatic, but he loses the inevitable lyrical movement, which marks a great song, in satisfying extraneous requirements. But with all these elements of weakness, natural of course to a composer of that primitive age of music, one thing he had beyond all question, a genuinely English touch in his melody. It defies analysis, but is clear enough to those who have heard much of his music. It is a tender pastoral grace and open air downrightness which I make bold to say is to be found in no music but English. It is to be found in "Come unto these yellow sands," "Full fathom five," and "I attempt from love's sickness to fly," not to quote other less known music.

Then as a true Englishman he did not fail to appreciate the value of concerted music. Italians hardly ever wrote anything beyond duets in their operas; in Purcell's are to be found duets, trios, and above all choruses in large numbers; the short chorus, which merely repeats the tune of the song; the dramatic chorus, which takes an intrinsic part in the action of the scene; and the longer reflective chorus, which serves as comment on the drama. As an example of the first we may take the well-known "Come if you dare"; of the second, the chorus of leading and misleading spirits in *King Arthur*, or the great sacrificial shout of the Druids, "We have sacrificed"; and of the third, the tender, pathetic "With drooping wings, ye Cupids come," with which the chorus broods over Dido's funeral pyre. By such innovations Purcell shows the daring and resource of his genius, and that such original ideas must have influenced Handel, who came directly after him, seems inevitable. We recognize his idiom in the recitatives "I rage, I melt, I burn" (*Acis*) or "Then long eternity" (*Samson*); in short syncopated airs like "Queen of Summer" (*Theodora*), and above all in his use of the chorus. He had written choruses before in Italy,

but the oratorio choruses were something quite new. Their dramatic interest—the flies, the “darkness that might be felt,” the monosyllable thunderbolts launched by the full choir over a rolling bass—these were due to his experience of English voices and English music. He carried on the work which Purcell began. The ascent of the quivering voices in the Frost Scene or the clash of the dissonant bell harmonies in “Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell” must have been new to Handel (at least his earlier works show no trace of anything of the kind); and it is largely that dramatic quality which made his choruses so attractive to the English democracy. I think this fact is hardly sufficiently realized when we regret that Handel “swept away” Purcell’s dramatic music.

In his first opera, *Dido and Aeneas*, Purcell followed the example of the Italians. The dialogue was written in recitative. Dryden had said that “whosoever undertakes the writing of an opera is obliged to imitate the design of those, who have not only invented but brought to perfection this sort of dramatic musical entertainment”; and all the dramatic works that had been attempted before had been in that style. But with *King Arthur* he broke away and used his own judgment. He agreed with a writer in the *Gentleman’s Journal* that “our English genius will not relish that perpetual singing,” and wrote his operas as plays with musical scenes. The chief actors no longer sang as they had sung in *Dido*; special characters were introduced for the purpose. The plays which have the most music, and are therefore most dependent upon it, are *King Arthur*, the *Fairy Queen*, and the *Tempest*. These may with the greatest justice be called Purcell’s operas, though not in the same sense as *Dido*, which is musical throughout. It seems a pity, considering Purcell’s extraordinary gift for expressive recitative, that he should not have worked out his first style; instead of that, he has left an entirely detached set of solos, duets, trios, and choruses to represent his dramatic works. But it is clear that the change is due to his own mature judgment. The three more important works contain also a large quantity of instrumental music, preludes, dance and ‘curtain’ tunes. Here is the chance of the stage manager. When the play is such as *The Midsummer Night’s Dream*, the whole action calls for music, and the many dances without assigned purpose will naturally find a place in the spoken part of the drama and bring it in keeping with the rest.

When considering Purcell’s music for the *Fairy Queen*, we can hardly avoid some comparison with Mendelssohn’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Both composers, it may be said, wrote only occasional music to the drama. Their music does not take an

immediate part in the action of the play. But while Mendelssohn confined himself to the opportunities which the poet himself gives for music, Purcell's librettist set himself to translate some parts of the drama into musical terms. To do this he used as his means of expression the form of the masque, then of course much more familiar than now. He replaces the long scene of the wandering lovers in the third act by a masque of love. Three songs show love as passion, desire, and social intrigue, and Purcell has clearly illustrated these three different aspects by the character of his setting. Again in the Masque of sleep which follows the second act, though here the librettist has no more than the fairy lullaby to go upon, he gives a progressive picture in the songs of Night, Mystery, Secresie, and Sleep, of which the composer is not slow to avail himself. The delicate, muted violins and viola of the opening song "Night" weave the cobweb curtains of departing day; the smoothly moving quavers of "Mystery" suggest the oncoming of twilight; the soft flutes of "Secresie" breathe the serenades of the hours of darkness; and above all the heavy silences of the bass solo and chorus "Sleep" give a picture of the stillness and unconsciousness of midnight. Such interpretations help to show how the masque form as Purcell received it gave scope to his originality. Little as it has to do with Shakespeare, it is true music drama, and these scenes, outrages as they may seem on the original play, gave the composer the opportunity he required. While Mendelssohn's music is dependent on Shakespeare's inspiration, Purcell's has a value of its own. He uses the play as the oratorio writer uses his story—to provide situations suitable for musical illustration. There are two other scenes of music and dancing (masques, as I have for convenience called them) at the end of the fourth and fifth acts. The first springs from the awakening of Titania; the chorus calls the company to salute the rising sun, for "'tis the birthday of King Oberon" (a fact for which Shakespeare gives no authority). Phœbus descends in a chariot, drawn by four horses. He is greeted with trumpets and drums. Then follow the songs of the seasons, with dances; treble, alto, tenor, and bass; Winter "footing it slow" to the chromatic bass, which seems associated in Purcell's mind with the idea of cold. The second begins with a scene, in which Theseus declares that he disbelieves the "Antick Toys" and "Fairy Fables" told him by the lovers. Thereupon Oberon, Titania, and all the fairies enter. A symphony is heard, and Oberon says—

' 'Tis fairy music sent by me,  
To cure your incredulitie,'

while Titania draws Theseus' attention to Juno, who appears in a machine, drawn by peacocks. It is hardly necessary to remark that this is a grievous breach of Shakespeare's fairy canon. The fairies are not seen by the serious persons of the drama, nor can they hold intercourse with them. The first musical scene of the drama, in which the fairies pinch and illtreat three drunken poets, is also unsatisfactory. Musically, with its stammering songs, snatches of mischievous chorus, and final lullaby, it may be effective, but it is a poor introduction to Shakespeare's fairyland.

The finale is a masque of marriage. To increase the gorgeous effect of the scene, it is laid in a Chinese garden with strange birds and beasts; a fountain throws up "much water." Here a Chinese man and woman sing the joys of love. Then follows a monkey dance; two women sing songs of rejoicing, and the chorus cries Hark! Hark! at the end to call up the god of marriage, who is still absent.

Sure the dull god of marriage does not hear,  
We'll rouse him with a chorus; Hymen hear.

Then Hymen enters, and sings with the two women an epithalamium of the utmost brightness and vivacity, and the chorus brings it to an end with one of those strong rhythmical strains of which Purcell was so fond. What a pantomime it is, made out of Shakespeare's "song and dance" with a bergomask to follow! The original scenery was magnificent; but the players complained of the cost. "The court and town were wonderfully satisfied with it, but the expences in setting it out being so great the company got very little by it." And no wonder. It was performed first in May, 1692, and the critic says "The opera has at last appeared, and continues to be represented daily; the drama is Shakespeare's; the Music and Decorations are extraordinary."

In October, 1701, the score is advertised as lost, and so remained for nearly two hundred years. For this reason there can be no doubt that the Cambridge revival will be the first performance of Purcell's opera complete since his own life time, and those interested in English music will await the result with the utmost curiosity. Will it prove possible, if we dismiss all our Shakespearian scruples, to make the thing an acting play and weld the music into the drama? Will the music hold the hearer apart from its purely antiquarian interest? There will be many questions to be solved of the utmost difficulty; the arrangement of the score, the speed of the dances and their position in the play. However earnestly it is desired to respect the original intention of the composer, the work must require skilful modification. I once heard the *Yorkshire*



*Feast Song* with modern instruments, and much of the score sounded harsh and empty. Twice I have heard *Dido and Æneas*, once slightly modernized, and the supplemented version was more satisfactory than that in which the score was left severely alone. The ancient instruments had a different character. The hautboy had a far less penetrating tone, and the trumpet, with a thicker tube and smaller bore, sounded more like a flute, there was no harshness, and the high runs and trills came out of it far more easily than from the modern trumpet. Then, the pitch was a whole tone below our present medium pitch, as Canon Galpin, who possesses a hautboy (1680) and a bassoon (1747), assures me. Will the score be transposed in accordance with this fact? It is, of course, a matter of the utmost importance to the voices. It solves the difficult question of what to do with the numerous solos for contra-tenor, bringing them within the reach of an ordinary high tenor. Even the part of Mopsa, the shepherdess, was sung by a man, "Mr. Pate, in woman's habit." But it is the singing itself which is of sovereign importance. I can never remember without a shudder a certain performance of a Purcell masque, in which a large part of the music consisted in duets and trios, mostly for men's voices, and sounding like pieces from old fashioned cathedral anthems, sung with difficulty by members of the choir. That they could do them at all was, one felt, to the performers a matter of pride; but they had no idea of expressing anything by their laborious roulades. To be a Purcell singer, to express oneself by his means, requires something more than a voice and a knowledge of music. It requires an intimate acquaintance with his style, now long forgotten, and therefore specially difficult to acquire.

One thought, we may be sure, will pass through the minds of many of those who hear the *Fairy Queen*. Oh if Purcell could have used more of the words of Shakespeare, instead of the poor stuff which he was given! And in the case of such lyrics as "Ye spotted snakes" we thoroughly agree. But the words of Shakespeare, which were written for dialogue, possess a literary quality, and that is often inimical to a musical setting. Dryden in his preface to *King Arthur* writes "The numbers of poetry and vocal music are sometimes so contrary, that in many places I have been obliged to cramp my verses and make them rugged to the reader that they may be harmonious to the hearer; of which I have no reason to repent me . . . especially as they are passing through the hands of Mr. Purcel, who has composed them with so great a genius that he has nothing to fear but an ignorant ill-judging audience." The truth of this dictum it would require an essay to discuss, but it shows that Purcell, who must have frequently discussed the matter



with Dryden, was not generally in favour of too poetical words. Perhaps he preferred Dryden and Tate to Shakespeare deliberately. We cannot tell.

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*February 13th.* The performance at Cambridge yesterday proved that there is a surprising amount of vitality in the opera. Whether it was the music, or the dances, or the dresses, or the fresh young faces and voices of the performers, or all of them put together, there is no doubt that it was vastly entertaining. The result of making Shakespeare's play and Shakespeare's fairies the foundation of a great musical ballet is not incongruous; the story goes into the background, rests awhile, and is taken up again without offence. The *Fairy Queen* was interesting both to the antiquarian and the artist. The performers were nearly all amateurs; there were no outstanding voices. Much of the dancing was of the romping school-girl type, and none the worse for that. The scenery was of the simplest—just three cloths to form a varying background; the end of the fourth act, where Phœbus, surrounded by uplifted trumpets, forms the centre of a great tableau, suggested a Velasquez.

The chorus, always well in tune, added a charm to the spectacular parts of the play. It took a telling part in the persecution of the drunken poet, or made the long silences of the song of Sleep impressive, or greeted the radiant vision of Phœbus. It is not necessary to bring Khovantchina over from Russia to show us the dramatic value of a chorus; music of the kind is our English speciality. It may be a question how much of the charm of the piece is due to Purcell's invention, or how far he really intended the development of thought obtained by these moving masques, and the progressive effect which the colour and the shifting lights and shadows give to the series of songs and dances. We can only work them out in our modern way. But there can be no doubt that the whole is a genuine form of musical expression.

Of the solo singing, dance songs like "Trip it" in the second act were the best; the style of the more serious songs was not understood as well as it might have been. The difficulty of the counter-tenor airs was solved by allotting some of them to men's voices, others to contraltos. It was curious to hear Phœbus' attendants singing "Let the fifes and the clarions" in falsetto, and in black beards, and difficult to avoid sympathising with the lady who had to begin "A thousand thousand ways we'll find" on tenor G. The orchestra was Purcell's with the addition of a single bassoon, and there was a double harpsichord for the solos. The pitch was only our ordinary low pitch, which got the trumpets into difficulties

occasionally, and helped to spoil some of the songs. The actors in the play proper were put into the shade by the music; but the rustics were amusing, and their scenes were preserved entire, except that the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe was acted in dumb show to the tune of one of the dances. The masque of Hymen suffered from the fact that the entry of the Chinese man and woman lacked explanation, and that little had been done to dress the chorus in keeping. The closing tableau was inferior to that at the end of the fourth act.

E. D. RENDALL.

## THE MYSTERY OF ELCHE

ELCHE differs from all other Spanish towns by being built in the middle of a forest of palm-trees. From the tower of the cathedral you look down on the flat roofs of an oriental city, with the palms, the desert, the mountains and the distant sea, and can almost believe you are in one of those pictures of the Holy land in the books which good children used to look at on Sundays. Down in the town however Elche is not very different from other places in the south of Spain ; but in one respect it differs from them all. Every year, on the 14th and 15th August a sacred music-drama is sung in the cathedral, a "mystery" on the Death and Assumption of the Virgin Mary, with the same words and music and, as some say, the same stage-properties which have been used since the 15th century.

The affinities of the Mystery of Elche seem to lie with opera ; opera, at any rate, is the nearest thing to it in modern life. It differs from "Everyman" and from the Passion play, because all the words are set to music. It might be compared with *Parsifal*, if *Parsifal* had never been performed away from Bayreuth ; or it might be compared with an opera on a subject with which every one is familiar, like the story of Orpheus, where the audience knows not only the story, but who the characters are and what has happened before the play begins.

In May 1266, or (as others say) in December 1370, an "ark" drifted to the coast of Spain. It was labelled "for Elche," and was found to contain an image of the Virgin Mary as well as the words, music and ceremonial of a liturgical drama, written in Limousine. These dates may be compared with the record that Elche was taken from the Moors by James I of Aragon about 1238 and became formally part of the kingdom in 1296. The population at the time of the conquest consisted partly of Moors, and partly of Mozarab Christians who spoke Arabic and used an Arabic version of the Bible. The Mystery was performed, according to the directions given, until the death of the Infante Don Carlos in July 1568, when it was forbidden by Philip II. Towards the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th century, heavy rains fell in the middle of

August, hail destroyed the crops and the gardens were ruined. In many parts of Southern Europe to-day calamities of nature, such as eruptions, showers of ashes, storms and floods are attributed to the anger or forgetfulness of the tutelary saint; processions are organized (like that described by Norman Douglas in "South Wind" or by Blasco Ibañez in "Entre Naranjos") and often are still in progress when the storm ceases. The people of Elche naturally remembered the procession and the Mystery which they used to celebrate at that time of year, and the town council resolved in 1603 that the traditional festival should be restored, and the costs borne by the town. They decided at the same time that, as Philip II was dead, no event however terrible, not even the death of the Sovereign, should prevent the celebration from being held. This looks like a struggle between the civil and ecclesiastical authority. It is known that Mysteries were often censored by the Bishops; the decision of the *Ayuntamiento* to bear the costs and keep the festival going in spite of the Church shows that the Mystery and procession were so deeply rooted in the affections of the populace that they meant more to them than their religion itself. Besides, if any more storms came at harvest time and there were no procession, public order would only be maintained with great difficulty. Since 1608 the expenses of the festival have been met partly by a capitation tax and partly by the bequest of some few plantations of palm trees, known as the *Huertos de la Virgen*.

The story of the Mystery, the Death and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, is taken from the apocryphal gospels; it is also to be found in the "Golden Legend." The existing text dates from 1639, but is undoubtedly taken from some manuscript far older than that, and is written, in four-line stanzas of different metres, in Limousine (a form of old Provençal, allied to modern Valencian and Catalan). The earliest existing copy of the music is dated 1709, about the time that the present, the third, cathedral at Elche was finished. It has been closely examined by Don Felipe Pedrell, the most learned of living Spanish musicians; and was described and illustrated by him in the *Sammelband* of the *International Musical Society* for 1901 (II, 203-252). The copy was made by a certain Lozano y Ruiz, who seems to have worked from a 16th century manuscript; not only has he preserved the diamond-shaped notes of 16th century notation, but he has written out the vocal parts separately and not in score. In the 15th and 16th centuries this was the regular practice; the large illuminated choir-books still used in many Spanish cathedrals are placed on a lectern, and the singers read from whatever portion of the page their own part may happen to be—i.e. *cantus*, at the top of the left-hand page,

*bassus* at the bottom of the right-hand page, and so on. The same system was adopted in early printed editions of Henry Lawes ; and Mr. Dent in his life of Alessandro Scarlatti (p. 93) mentions a beautifully executed MS. of enormous size, in which four parts are written out separately in the same way. Yet the notation and the arrangement of the parts would hardly be enough in themselves to prove, as some have thought, that Lozano y Ruiz was copying from a 16th century original. Diamond-shaped notes were used occasionally, in printed music, down to the end of the 18th century —by Padre Martini for instance, in the illustrations to the great book on counterpoint, written to prove that the Spanish Jesuit, Padre Eximeno, had after all been talking a good deal of nonsense.

The music performed in the Elche Mystery clearly belongs to two different periods. Much of it is 16th century polyphonic music by Spanish contemporaries of Palestrina, Lasso, and Vittoria (c. 1560) or of our own Byrd and Gibbons (c. 1590). The names of some of the composers who set choruses in the second part of the Mystery have been preserved. Juan Ginés Pérez was born at Orihuela, a little town between Elche and Murcia, in 1548 and was thus about eight years older than Vittoria. Another name mentioned is Ribera, whom Señor Pedrell identifies with Antonio de Ribera, cantor in the pontifical chapel in Rome from 1513 till 1523 and composer of church music, most of which is preserved in the cathedral library at Tarazona, near Saragossa. It is unfortunate that the most lively of his compositions, the three choruses of Jews, with their strong rhythms and suggestions of the fandango, should have been cut out from the modern performance, for they would provide the same effect of contrast as the minuet in *Samson*, or the hiccupping Dagon-chorus of Philistines. The work of the other composer whose name is given, Lluís Vich, has nothing striking about it. It is only in the second part of the Mystery that the names of composers appear. The music of the first part is more archaic, though it contains one of the most beautiful numbers in the Mystery, the "Chorus of the Blest" at the end. The most striking pieces of music are however the long solos of the Blessed Virgin ; and these, curiously, are not sung as they stand in the score of 1709, but to a profusely ornamented version of a variant of the original, which has been handed down by tradition. It has been concluded that these are fragments of the music of an original 15th century drama ; they have certain affinity with the Mozarabic chant sung in Toledo, and were made unusually interesting in performance by being sung by a boy, who threw them off with as much ease and simplicity as if he were singing in the street.

The Mystery of Elche, then, seems to be the 17th century version



of something much older. But no one who witnesses it now can have any doubt but that he is assisting at a festival which belongs essentially to the baroque period. As in all baroque art, it will be found that the "aberrations" condemned by the gothic enthusiasts of an earlier generation are carefully and deliberately planned, and are superimposed upon a strictly formal basis derived now from Renaissance, now from Gothic forms. It will be apparent too that the union of classical paganism with romantic Christianity, achieved for a moment by Ariosto, by Milton and by Goethe—the union, in fact, between Helen and Faust—is, or might be, achieved in the Mystery of Elche.

It is difficult at first for a traveller from the north of Europe to accommodate himself to the conditions of performance. The thought of a medieval mystery celebrated in a cathedral suggests darkness, lofty aisles lost in dim perspective, a hushed expectant audience—something in fact between Bayreuth and Westminster Abbey. The background at Elche is none of these things; it is more like a mixture of Covent Garden and a crowd waiting in the street to see Marshal Foch. The performances are given in broad daylight. The cathedral which, like those at Valencia, Játiva and elsewhere shews the influence of Herrera the architect of the Escorial, is filled in every corner. The sloping gangway in the middle aisle by which the characters enter, is thronged with spectators and policemen; most of the side altars have been cleared of their contents so that they may be stood upon without desecration; the two pulpits hold from six to eight people each; the galleries are full, so also are the railed-in spaces in front of the windows of the dome; a certain number of people are perched somehow in mid-air, in front of and between the enormous candlesticks on the high altar; and a large sheet of yellow canvas is stretched from the west door to shelter a few hundred people who have not been in time to get standing-room inside. The crowded cathedral and especially the galleries suggested Goya's frescoes in San Antonio de la Florida—a sea of mantillas, fans and ceaseless chattering. Under the dome is a wide stage (*cadafal*) with a wooden railing. The dome has a canvas drawn across it, on which some attempt has been made to represent heaven in the style of Correggio; behind the canvas is a stout wooden floor with a trap-door, and a powerful derrick in charge of a young sailor.

The celebration of the Mystery occupies two afternoons: the *Vesprá* on the 14th August representing the Death of the Virgin, and the *Festa* on the 15th, the Assumption and Coronation. The stage as set for the first afternoon shows a large bed of ebony inlaid with silver, surrounded by properties representing the garden

of Gethsemane, mount Calvary and the holy Sepulchre. On the stage are a number of priests, the master of the ceremonies, two standard-bearers, an officer in uniform and the three 'camareras' of the Blessed Virgin—all in modern clothes. Until the performance actually began the three camareras were a disturbing element; for they reminded one irresistibly both in bearing and demeanour of Donna Anna and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, and one knew instinctively what sort of music these would sing if they were given the chance.

The Mystery begins with the entry of the Blessed Virgin. She appears at the west door, with her attendants, and walks the full length of the cathedral up to the stage. She wears blue and white robes and a golden halo, and is accompanied by a number of children—the "two Maries" dressed like herself, "angels" in white lace, and the "elect"—delicious small boys in orange-coloured shirts with crimson sashes. They group themselves in front of the high altar, and a boy's voice is heard in a cascade of runs, turns, triplets and flourishes—

*Ay trista vida corporal!  
O mon cruel tan desigual!*

—which are repeated with different words in front of the Gethsemane, the Calvary and the holy Sepulchre; after which the Virgin kneels on the bed and sings the *Vexilla regis* in Limousine, to the same kind of endlessly wavering, immensely decorated plain-song chant.

Then the heavens open, and what appears to be a large orange is let down to the accompaniment of peals of bells and full organ. When some little way above the stage, the golden fruit opens like a pomegranate, revealing the radiant form of an Angel with a palm branch in his hand, standing as it were in the middle of a flower with the petals open below him. During the burst of applause which follows, the angel sings a few words of greeting—

*Deu vos salve, Verge imperial,  
Mare del Rey celestial,  
Yo us port saluts é salvament  
Del vostre Fill omnipotent.*

—The Virgin Mary is expected in paradise, and on the third day will be proclaimed Queen of heaven and of all angels. The palm shall be borne before her to the burial. The angel kisses the palm branch and lays it on the bed. The virgin replies in the same plain-song chant as before—

*Angel plaent é illuminós . . .*

begging that one thing may be granted her before her death—to see the Apostles once again. Singing that her wish shall be accom-

plished, the angel ascends into heaven, and St. John, the first of the apostles to arrive, enters by the west door.

By this time the excitement of the audience and the heat had increased to such a pitch that the "beloved disciple" was almost inaudible, and the swinging, popular melody he has to sing was completely lost :

*Saluts, honor é salvament . . .*

While the Virgin, to a characteristic, wavering chant, is giving St. John the palm, St. Peter, St. James and two other apostles force their way through the crowd, followed at a short distance by the rest. At the foot of the stage they are collected by the conductor and a man with a big brass instrument, and sing a trio. St. James, the patron saint of Spain has returned hurriedly from a missionary journey in the Peninsula :

*De les parts de asi estrañes*

*Som venguts molt prestament.*

Eventually all the apostles succeed in reaching the stage and sing the *Salve Regina*, partly in Latin, partly in Limousine, supported by the booming brass instrument ; but this, at a temperature of about 120°, would have failed to keep even gentlemen of the Chapel Royal in tune. To St. Peter's question as to the reason for this gathering of the glorious company of the apostles, the Virgin replies with almost her last breath and falls back upon the bed. A lighted candle is put into her hands and the apostles kneel round the bed singing :

*O cos sant glorificat . . .*

Once again the heavens open, and the *Ara Coeli* descends—a golden swing in which is an angel surrounded by angel musicians as in many Italian pictures, harp and guitar above, and two smaller (dummy) guitars below, singing a chant with a characteristic rhythmical figure which is repeated whenever they reappear in the course of the Mystery. Having descended lightly on to the bed on which the Blessed Virgin is lying the musicians of the 'Ara Coeli' sing a chorus which, in beauty and serenity, should surpass all the other choral music of the Mystery. Unfortunately, the enthusiasm of the audience makes it almost inaudible, while the fussing of priests moving about in front of the bed renders it very difficult to see exactly what happens. At last however the *Ara Coeli* ascends once more to the dome, the angel carrying a small image of the Virgin, representing her soul ; and so the first day of the Mystery ends.

On the morning of the second day, the Feast of the Assumption itself, there is a very curious procession ; an image of the Blessed

Virgin is borne through the streets on a litter in circumstances which, down to the black gloves worn by the Alcalde, all point to its being a solemn funeral. The *Santa y Venerable Imágen de nuestra Señora* appears to date from the 17th century; it is a beautifully executed piece of work in painted wood, with a dignity and real beauty not always found in such things. The embroidered robes are of indescribable richness; the arrangement of cushions and hangings was obviously very carefully planned at some time during the baroque period. The feet of the image rest between the horns of a silver crescent, a fact which no one in Elche could explain. The explanation is, however, to be found in "The Golden Bough."\* Who is this Goddess, whose festival is celebrated at the hottest and most luxuriant period of the year and whose sacred image is borne to burial with feet resting upon the crescent moon?

Neither the procession nor the Mystery is purely a church festival. It was through the efforts of the town that the Mystery was revived at the beginning of the 17th century; it is the town which pays the apostles who act as pall-bearers, and other important functionaries in the procession. And the town, in the person of the new and capable Alcalde, Don Antonio Rodríguez Giménez, is trying to infuse some order and stage management into the crowd of priests and deacons, choristers and acolytes; as well as to marshal the band, the town council and the local notabilities into an orderly and dignified *cortège*, instead of a disorderly rabble of perspiring individuals spilling candle-grease over each other's clothes. The Alcalde got the procession to start well, directing it in person at the church door and by deputy within the church. But by the time the procession had traversed three or four streets the intense heat had made nearly every one forget what he was supposed to be doing or what part of the column he belonged to; and those who bore the canopy never seemed to know whether they were sheltering the Miraculous Image, the "two Maries" who walked behind it, or St. John who preceded it with the palm-branch. Apart from the Alcalde, the only dignified figure in the procession was that of the Virgin-Goddess herself, whose impassive loveliness made up for the shortcomings of the others and seemed to connect the present with a civilization and a view of life which, as far as Elche was concerned, had long passed away.

The second part of the Mystery opens with the entry of the "two Maries" in their blue, starry robes and golden halos, accompanied by the little lace-clad angels, by the elect in their crimson and orange and by the apostles in their traditional "masks": St. Peter with an

\* Vol. I, ch. i, p. 14 (edition of 1911).



enormous key, St. John, St. James in his curious, rather 16th century Spanish dress, which he (like George Borrow) adopted when travelling with the Bible in Spain—all indeed except St. Thomas. They mount the stage leaving the "two Maries" at the foot of the steps and sing:

*Par nos germans devem anár . . .*

—the "Maries" should know that they had come to bury the Virgin. They go down the steps to where the Maries are standing and, having obtained their consent, mount the stage once more. St. Peter takes up the palm which is lying on the litter and gives it to St. John—

*Preneu vos, Joan, la palma preciosa . . .*

upon which all the apostles gather round the litter and sing a chorus.

At this point Jews (and, in the earliest versions of the mystery, even the Devil himself) used to break in upon the scene. Señor Pedrell prints three characteristic choruses by Antonio de Ribera, full of fresh popular effects; and the libretto on sale in the church (1881) prints the words of the Jews who interrupt. The episode was suppressed originally because the realistic struggle between St. Peter and the *Judiada* led on one occasion to the shedding of blood; and even in these days the confusion is so great that it is impossible to see whether the Jew-episode has been left out altogether or whether it is formally represented by one man. The intervention and conversion of the Jews must have formed part of the Mystery before 1492, for in that year they were expelled by order of Queen Isabella.

The next episode is a repetition of the procession, round the stage. It is well-managed; the priests and policemen for once get out of the way, and the brightly-coloured masks of the apostles, the orange and crimson of the "elect," the blue of the *Dos Marias* and the stately beauty of the sacred image itself are clearly visible. Meanwhile a tomb is erected in the middle of the stage and, the procession over, the sacred image is lowered into it. Then the heavens are opened. Amid frenzied and vociferous excitement and the pealing of the organ, the *Ara Coeli* descends once more and hovers above the sepulchre, the angel in the middle bearing the little image, the soul of the Blessed Virgin. The heavens are opened a second time, and the Holy Trinity itself appears, carefully let down to about a fifth of the distance between the dome and the chancel. Where it hangs "at the gates of heaven" while the sacred image is fastened in the *Ara Coeli* and begins its ascent.

But suddenly above all the din and clatter a powerful, well-trained voice was heard from somewhere near the cathedral door—St. Thomas, returning late from his missionary journey to the



Indies, an episode which must clearly have been added later than 1492, the year of the discovery of America. He went on singing as he forced his way through the crowd, and thoroughly deserved the embrace which St. Peter gave him when he reached the stage. Then all eyes were turned to the dome. There was a moment's pause, but not silence, and then a crown descended from the Trinity on to the head of the Virgin. There was a wild burst of applause, the apostles began a final chorus accompanied by the organ and by the euphonium which was not in tune with it, the bells rang and a brass band which has been concealed behind the high altar played the *Marcha Real* in a different key, while the Virgin, crowned and majestic, ascended gloriously into heaven.

What is the Mystery of Elche as it is seen to-day? The earliest existing text, without the music, has the title *consueta de la Festa de Nostra Señora de la Assumptió que es celebra en dos Actes, Vesprá y día, en la insigne villa de Elig* . . . 1639. By *consueta* was meant originally the book of ceremonies or ritual for use in cathedral churches; but the word came eventually to be used in Catalonia and Valencia for any liturgical drama or *auto sacramental*. The Mystery of Elche is not strictly an *auto* as this word signifies a spectacle in honour of the Holy Sacrament, and was not introduced until later.

The Spanish people had been accustomed from very early times to hearing primitive musico-religious dramas and entertainments of various kinds, such as *villancicos* at Christmas, and there was nothing new or strange about a performance in which all the words were set to music. The most successful composer, both of words and music, was Juan de Encina (1468-1529?). Lúcas Fernández wrote a famous *Auto de la Pasion* and Miguel de Carvajal produced the mystical tragedy of *Josefina* in 1520. The music of these works was polyphonic, not greatly different from what was sung in church. The performers themselves were often priests, besides choir-boys, children, and laymen of good character, so that in some ways the show was merely a continuation of the church service. But the dramatic possibilities of the form, and probably also the incompetence of cathedral authorities in all questions of stage-management, led the music-drama gradually away from the Church; and eventually it seems to have turned into that characteristically Spanish form of comic opera, the *zarzuela*. In the Mystery of Elche is preserved an example of a *consueta*, the Catalan and Valencian form of these early religious music dramas. The words and music of others, dating from the 15th and 16th centuries are preserved in several of the churches of Majorca. A characteristic feature of these is the predominance

of unaccompanied plain-song. They are on various subjects: the Temptation, the Prodigal Son, Lazarus; but at the moment of their highest artistic development the ecclesiastical authority intervened and in 1594 the Bishop of Majorca forbade the performances "for abuse and irreverence in the treatment of the symbolic text." Learned musicians, however, who have been in Majorca at Christmas or during Holy Week, have detected suggestions of these vanished *consuetas* in the processions and celebrations which they witnessed.

It is unlikely that the *consueta*-form could have developed further on its own lines. The character of dramatic music was changing, in Spain as in Italy; and the theatre music of Calderon's time is quite different from that of the earlier *villancicos* and *autos*. The sense of the older and modal tonalities was being lost, and instruments were being introduced to accompany the voices. Thus the music of the festival held at Toledo in 1555 for the conversion of England seems to have been mainly vocal; but at the canonization of St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Francis Xavier at Toledo in 1622, there were different "choirs," one consisting of sackbuts (trombones), bassoons and horns, and the other of voices accompanied by an organ. The music was described by someone who was present, as "new and very curious"—as no doubt it was.

The nearest thing to the Mystery of Elche is a *consueta* discovered by Don Juan Pie and reproduced by him in 'Autos sacramentales del siglo XIV.' It is on the subject of the Assumption, written in Limousine, and dated 10th March 1420. Like the Mystery of Elche it makes use of the emblem of the palm-branch, the gathering of the apostles about the death-bed of the Virgin, and the singing of the *Vexilla regis*. It contains also the episode of St. Peter's struggle with the Jews which has dropped out from the performance at Elche, and one scene in which Lucifer himself comes on the stage—a dramatic point which must have pleased the audience but which was cut out by the Church for appearing less terrible than comic; the faithful would never really believe in a hell which they could laugh at. There are traces of other Assumption plays having been performed in medieval Spain. Plays of the same kind were given in Florence and Modena in the 14th century, at Bayeux (1351), Montauban (1442) and the Assumption forms one of the episodes in the *Mystère des Actes des Apôtres*. The popularity of the story was derived from the cult of the Virgin Mary, which is the motive of the *Cantigas* and *Loores* in praise of the Madonna written by Alphonso X (the "Wise") who was king of Castile and Leon at the time of the birth of Dante. This in turn had grown out of the respect for women taught to a bar-

barous continent, Christian indeed but savage and superstitious to the last degree, by the Provençal poets; and afterwards developed by Petrarch in the direction of passion, and by Boccaccio in the direction of intellect.

The evidence, then, seems to show that the Mystery of Elche dates originally from the 15th century. It is however in a 17th century setting, like one of those side-chapels in a cathedral, in which the altar-piece is a "primitive" though the frame and surroundings belong to the baroque period. It is like Spain itself, where the "mystery" may be medieval, though the appearance is mainly 17th century.

Neither modern Spain nor the Mystery of Elche need, nor will they tolerate, prejudiced or unintelligent criticism on the part of foreigners. But as the former will always welcome the well-informed and sympathetic study of experts, (especially of experts in economics), so the Mystery of Elche will repay the attention of cultivated musicians. Before any suggestions can be made, it must be decided once and for all whether the Mystery is a church service or a dramatic representation. If it is a church service, then no criticism is possible and all attempts at stage-management are out of place. But if it is a liturgical drama, then an attempt might be made to observe some of the conventions and exigencies of a stage play. The stage itself should be kept clear of all except the performers. It should be possible for the officiating clergy and the policemen on duty to remain in their places, like the members of the Ayuntamiento and the Master of the Ceremonies. As it is, they interrupt the performance far more than the "Galants" and the "Citizen's Wife" in the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Again, if the singers cannot keep in tune (and owing to the great heat and the obscurity of some of the music, no one could blame them much for losing their pitch) the euphonium-player who supports them in the bass-part might stay in one place, instead of following them about. The conductor, too, should be in some position where he can really direct the performance, instead of running round the stage after the singers. Above all, the Mystery wants a stage-manager, and more rehearsing than is given to it at present. The Alcalde is perfectly aware of this, and showed by his handling of the procession that he realizes what may be done in this direction, and the necessity for it. He is, too, profoundly convinced of the greatness of the Mystery as a civic festival, and is likely to do a great deal in the way of improvement.

The Mystery is so beautiful in itself and in its intention, it offers such marvellous opportunities for lovely effects of colour and grouping of the traditional masks, and such tense moments of

collective emotion in a vast audience, that very little would suffice to make it a spectacle worth coming to Spain to see, and Elche a place of pilgrimage for those who love colour and music all over the world.

J. B. TREND.

Pedrell quotes, at the end of his article, No. I (see next page), which he calls the original music of 1639 to the first song of the Virgin, *Ay trista*, etc., and No. XXIII, the version which is substituted for it now, and which Mr. Trend heard last year. A portion of them is given here.

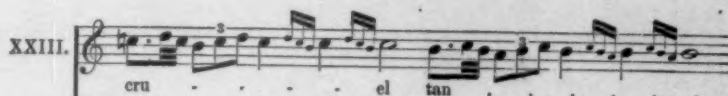
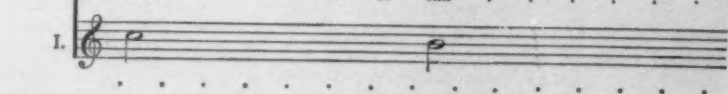
Of No. XXIII Pedrell writes: "This fragment has not been noted before now. Nobody took the trouble to do so, because every one at Elche, young and old, has it by heart . . . . I was able to make sure of the traditional manner of execution by hearing the boys and girls of Elche sing it. This traditional performance is a substitution for the original text . . . . The fragment undoubtedly belongs to a period long before the golden age of vocal polyphony. I do not venture to fix either the date or the liturgy (Eastern, Arabic or, more likely, Mozarabic) of this fragment."

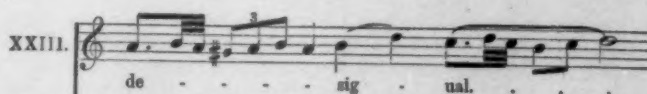
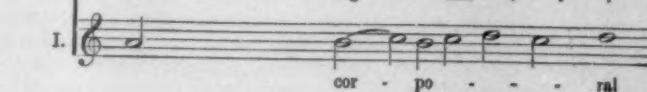
But internal evidence points to a later date for the popular version. Placed one under the other and both at the same pitch, No. XXIII is seen to be a highly ornamented version of No. I. It is clear then that No. XXIII is later than 1639, if that is the date of No. I; and as it contains nothing that is not a legitimate development of the other, it is unnecessary to look for its origin in a foreign liturgy.—ED.

XXIII.   
Ay tri . . . sta vi . . . da cor .  
I.   
Ay tri . . . sta . . .

XXIII.   
po . . . ral. . .  
I.   
vi . . .

XXIII.   
mon . . .  
I.   
da . . .

XXIII.   
cru . . . el tan . . .  
I.   
.

XXIII.   
de . . . sig nal. . .  
I.   
cor po . . . ral



## CURRENT TOPICS

### ROME.

YEARS ago, in the *Saturday Review* and elsewhere, "J.F.R." used to insist that if only we gave sufficient encouragement to the composition and performance of opera in England the musical ills from which we suffered would be healed, and the traditional reproach of being "un-musical" would gradually cease to have any point. It is a tempting theory, and of course it has a large basis of truth, but reflection upon conditions in Italy brings a doubt as to the value of opera as a panacea. To prevent misunderstanding I would say that I write as a confirmed opera-goer of long standing, who snatched at chances when chances were very rare and indulged in great bouts when these were possible, whose catholic affections, moreover, embrace the greater part of the field between *Orfeo* and *Pelléas*, and reach out beyond these landmarks.

In Italy opera is at home, and it is the music of the people, wherever the community is large enough to support a fair theatre. Apart from the large centres—Rome, Milan, Naples, Turin, Genoa, Florence, Palermo, Bologna, Venice, there are many smaller towns where excellent opera may be heard in the seasons (which varies in the different places). Of these Bari is perhaps the most important, for the Bari opera-house has had a knack of attracting young singers with a future, and a number of interesting *debutti* have been made there. Opera is given all over Italy, and it is given for every class. Not only are there special performances in the big opera-houses during the season, at "popular" and "very popular" prices, where you can hear the same operas and singers as in the ordinary performances, at a greatly reduced cost. There are additional "seasons" of opera, at the Costanzi for instance, at unfashionable times, early summer and autumn, and opera is always being given at one or more of the smaller Roman theatres. At one period of last summer "grand opera" was running simultaneously at four different theatres in Rome. And Rome is not very much bigger than Sheffield or Leeds. Opera is the musical food of the urban population of Italy, and as a popular recreation takes the place that in England is shared between the music-hall, the musical comedy and the ballad concert.

It sounds very healthy and it is very delightful. Only, opera had come to dominate Italian music as oil and tomatoes dominate Italian cooking. And the splendid exuberance of opera, its forms and its fashions, its special appeals, have certainly tended to stifle the developments of the other manifestations of musical art. Composers, performers, audiences, are apt to think in terms of opera. There are many exceptions, of course, to this broad generalisation, but on the whole it does stand.

In recent years there has been a definite movement away from the long tyranny of opera, but that movement is relatively limited, and it is not yet successful. To write in this strain sounds ungrateful in view of the Augusteo concerts in Rome, and particularly after the remarkable series of five concerts under that great conductor, Toscanini, to hear which Rome literally fought for tickets. People stood in queues from seven till ten a.m., waiting for the box-office to open, and the rush had to be controlled by carabinieri.

A considerable experience of the Augusteo concerts has brought me to the conclusion that three foreign composers commend themselves specially to both players and audience, Beethoven, Wagner, Strauss; and the Toscanini concerts showed that Leonora No. 3 commands greater appreciation than the Pastoral Symphony. Both were very finely played, and each was played at two concerts, but the overture was certainly more popular than the symphony. And the failure of the series was Mozart's E $\flat$  symphony, which was played twice to an unappreciative audience. It was not well played, and the perfunctory applause might perhaps be put down to that cause if it were not practically certain that players and audience were agreed in wondering why Toscanini had put it in the programme. For Mozart has little vogue in Italy. The operas are practically unknown; concerts of chamber music are too rare; and no doubt the public as a whole would agree with the critic of a Roman daily newspaper, who recently condemned all the orchestral music as hopelessly *démodé*, with the exception of the Jupiter Symphony and the Overture to the *Magic Flute*.

Another failure was Franck's D Minor Symphony, of which one critic wrote that "the extraordinary performance of the illustrious conductor (Toscanini) could only mitigate the innate defect of an incurable heaviness." Another critic contentedly quoted in condemnation the dictum of a *confrère* that César Franck "had nothing of the Latin in him." So that's that! An equal impatience was displayed, by many people at least, with Elgar's Symphonic Variations, which were included in two programmes. Toscanini has a special admiration for the Variations, and he made the orchestra play them very well, but the public and the critics were not convinced, and the repetition was rather resented. A Nocturne and Rondo Fantastico by Pich-Mangiagalli, written in 1913, were very well received, though the performance of the Nocturne was spoiled by an alarm of fire. Both are interesting, and one would like the chance of a second hearing, of which there seems no immediate probability.

It is impossible to leave the subject of the Toscanini concerts without reference to a truly memorable rendering of the Prelude and Liebestod. Looking back over twenty-five years, there are some half-dozen performances of widely differing pieces of great music which have stamped themselves on my memory as something altogether exceptional. This performance of Toscanini's adds one to the limited number. These incidents are as inexplicable as they are rare, but every music-lover has his own little collection of such experiences. I shall always be thankful to Toscanini that he did not repeat the Tristan music at the following concert, as had been expected. He knew better than to try again so soon.

The whole of the Costanzi season has been successful, though there has been nothing very striking so far. The most popular features have been

a good, but "italianate," performance of *The Valkyrie*, and a *Forza del Destino* put on specially for Battistini, whose wonderful vocal art almost makes one forget the passage of the years. He and Bonci afford an admirable lesson to young men in a hurry whose beautiful voices are condemned to early decay from lack of training and study. *The Valkyrie* was unequal. Guido Vaccari as Siegmund was excellent. He sang every note of his part and sang it with understanding, and it is worthy of remark that he sang the part twenty-two years ago, when "*La Valkyria*" was first given in Rome. He is not a *Heldentenor*, but Siegmund, after all, is only half a hero, a hero *manqué*. The women were not good vocally—Italy is badly off for *soprani drammatici* at present—and De Angelis, apart from his magnificent voice, is not well qualified for the rôle of Wotan. Seven "novelties" are on the Costanzi list—Mascagni's *Il Piccolo Marat*, Zandonai's *La Via della Finestra*, Giordano's *Madame Sans Gêne*, *Anima Allegra* by Vittadini, *L'uomo che ride* by Pedrollo, *Mina* by Domenico Alaleona and *Sumitra* by Pick-Mangiagalli. We are already warned that *Il Piccolo Marat* will not be ready, and the only novelty given so far is *La Via della Finestra*. The "book" is as light and slight as those of the lighter Donizettis, and as Zandonai's gift is much more for the orchestra than for the voice he is not well suited. A first hearing, at least, leaves the impression of a lack of the melody that remains the first essential of light opera. And each of the three acts ends with "voices off."

A new Musical Society has been founded in Rome with the title "*Amici della Musica*." It proposes to give five chamber concerts a year, and will help to fill the gap. Pizzetti's sonata for violin and piano still awaits a public hearing in his native land, though it has been performed with great success in Brussels, where some critics gave it the very highest praise. In Rome its first performance will probably be at one of a series of chamber concerts which are being arranged by private subscription.

The Scala is closed this year, owing to structural alterations and the Dal Verme is taking its place as the chief opera-house for the Milan season. *Siegfried* has been given many times at Turin, so that by travelling something over 400 miles it would have been possible to hear half the Ring this winter. The Ring as a whole has never been given in Italy. I am inclined to think that the impresario who broke the ice, at Rome and Milan, would have his reward.

W. K. McCLURE.

#### PARIS.

CHRISTMAS and the New Year saw little or no diminution in the presence of concert-giving which has lasted since the autumn season began. A great many people have played a great deal of music, but though the standard of the music and the ability of the performers has been high, no new works or interpreters of quite outstanding merit have so far been disclosed. Generally speaking, recital-givers have been content to perform the same hackneyed works, or else to make up patchwork programmes whose message is, from their excess of eclecticism, without much meaning to the intelligence.

Almost every nationality has been represented here. The Ukrainian choir under the direction of A. Kochitz triumphed deservedly. To an extreme beauty of sound they add precision of attack, faultless intonation, and a natural musical feeling which they communicate in an almost uncanny way to their hearers. Mr. Sem Dresden's "Madrigal Vereeniging" of Amsterdam, a much smaller body, also sang a *capella*, their choice ranging from Josquin to Ravel. The Hague quartet, too, showed themselves in a classical programme to be of first-rate quality. Elgar's *A*<sub>1</sub> Symphony, which Mr. Landon Ronald introduced at one of the *Lamoureux* concerts, failed to please some others besides M. Florent Schmitt. The London String Quartet and the Philharmonic Quartet both created a good impression.

The "Société Musicale Indépendante" [S.M.I.] continues its concerts, always interesting, and consisting mostly of first auditions. At one of these Francis Poulenc's "Sonata" for two unaccompanied clarinets produced an amusing effect; the way in which the composer treats the instruments is typical of the small group of young anti-impressionists—Satie, Auric, Honegger, and Darius Milhaud.

Turning now to the "Grands Concerts," such an important feature of Parisian music, the Padeloup have continued every Thursday their historical scheme illustrated by lectures; on Saturdays and Sundays their programmes are eclectic. M. Pierné maintains the extremely high standard of the Colonne, where the cult of Franck is practised with especial veneration; it is something of a revelation to listen there to the *D* minor Symphony, "Psyche," or the less-known, but magnificent, "Chasseur Maudit." It is his practice, which cannot be too highly commended, to perform a new work twice in the week. Among such works was Alfredo Casella's "Pagine di guerra"—a series of short, terse, almost cinematographic impressions of scenes in various theatres of the war. The orchestration is bold and the harmonies are audacious, but the work is vital and true. The Conservatoire (now under M. Philippe Gaubert) and *Lamoureux* orchestras confine themselves to Sunday concerts. Both are first-class. Among the first auditions at the *Lamoureux* were "Au Pays Wallon" by M. Marc Delmas (last year's *Grand Prix de Rome*) and Vincenzo Davico's "Impressions Antiques." There was a concert in January consisting entirely of modern Italian works, by Davico, Pietro Toschi, Malipiero, Pizzetti, Orefice, de Sabata Tommasini, Pratella and Casella.

In opera the only novelties have been *Gismonda* and *La reine Pédauque*, works which in no way mark an advance either in the technique of opera-writing or in purely musical value. The Opéra has given us the "Goyescas" of Granados. It is a work of a certain musicality, but it does not gain in effect by being mounted in the vast *cadre* of the Paris opera. The *décor*s (by Zuloaga, after Goya) were superb, but the singers very indifferent. The composer's son conducted the "Intermezzo" at the last rehearsal, and the Queen of Spain and Marshals Foch and Pétain were present. Shortly after the arrival from London of the Diaghilev Ballet, who have performed "The three-cornered hat" and "La boutique fantasque" for the first time in Paris, another strike broke out among the *petit personnel* of the Opéra—*ballerinas*, chorus, and orchestra, and all performances were suspended for eighteen days. The strikers demanded the salaries which had been applied for in May and granted in October but which had never been actually paid. The director of the



Opéra, M. Rouché, pointed to the nightly deficit of 5000 francs and said he could do nothing unless the State subvention was increased. However, the strikers have now obtained satisfaction, although they have had to promise thirty-six performances a year for nothing, if called for. In the meantime the prospect of obtaining an increased State grant is, however obviously desirable, remote.

Mme. Pavlova's season at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées came to an end with January. Her art is as perfect as ever, but her repertory leaves, musically, much to be desired. To the Diaghilev Ballet we turn for works and ideas; to Pavlova for consummate skill and individual accomplishment.

A new society has been started to facilitate the public performance of new and unpublished works of little known composers, and it gives, under the title of "*L'œuvre Inédite*," weekly concerts of such works. English composers who are interested should communicate with M. Bender, 12 Place d'Anvers, Paris IX. A novel feature of these concerts is that the public is invited to vote for the works it would like to hear again, or considers worthy of publication. The result of the vote is instructive and interesting.

One is glad to be able to record that there is no longer a "Wagner question" in Paris. With the resumption of the Wagnerian repertory by the great orchestras what controversy there had been promptly ceased, and Wagner is once more reinstated, in the concert-room at any rate—how long it will be before the operas are resumed is a matter for conjecture.

This letter must unfortunately close with the obituary notice of the new "Théâtre Lyrique," which abandoned opera at the end of January. MM. Ghensi and Deval had aimed high but could not, for financial reasons, carry out their programme. During its two months and a half, out of the operas mentioned in my previous letter as projected the following were actually mounted: *Cleopâtre* (an unhappy resurrection), *Méphis-tophélès* (with Vanni-Marcoux as Mephistopheles, Edith Mason as Marguerite, and Signor Polacco, an admirable conductor), *Boîte à Joujoux* (Ballet), *L'Enfant Prodigue*, *Demoiselle Elue*, and *Tarass-Boulba*. It was undoubtedly a foolhardy venture to compete as a private undertaking with the two national opera-houses of France.

R. H. MYERS.

#### LONDON LETTER.

LONDON being still a comparatively unmusical centre, it is inevitable that the importance of public performances should be grossly exaggerated. The London public looks upon its concerts and operas as a series of special treats rather than as a natural and necessary diet; and those whose task it is to chronicle the musical life of the city (which is indeed no life, but a depressing struggle for existence) are apt to dwell upon performers and performances to the exclusion of the music performed. Furthermore, the fact that our opportunities of hearing music rest upon no sure and established foundation promotes an uncritical attitude on the part of the public which feels that it must be grateful for crumbs and small



mercies lest it be deprived of sustenance altogether. Oblivious of our tradition and heritage of music, we have lost pride in our own musical intelligence. We cloak our slothful faculties with humility and gape in stupid wonder and gratitude at every novelty that is presented to us. A man is not considered a fool for regarding a simple piece of music as though it were a treatise on the fourth dimension. Though he hold the most decided opinions on other subjects, he will be deferential when it comes to music, afraid to express any opinion, afraid to say *Bo!* to a Goossens. He will cheerfully confess to an ignorance of music of which he would be ashamed with regard to literature or politics, imagining that he is thereby absolved from the necessity of questioning anything a self-styled "expert" likes to tell him. The "expert" too often encourages this attitude, persuades him that music is an esoteric mystery to which he, the expert, alone has the key, and while feigning to enlighten him on the subject, carefully contrives to bewilder him more and more and to darken what little musical understanding he originally possessed.

We are at present suffering from a surfeit of musical propaganda. Our concert-halls have become a dumping-ground for any and every musical experimenter "regardless-like." It is no use replying that this is a mere misinterpretation of the catholicity of our taste. On the whole we have no taste and no discrimination where contemporary music is concerned. We have all been attracted and charmed by the brilliant works to which the Russian Ballet has introduced us. Now somebody comes along beating the big drum and proclaiming Stravinsky one of the greatest composers that ever lived. For the past few months it has been impossible to pick up any musical journal without finding a long and verbose article (reminding one irresistibly of the closely-printed panegyrics in which patent medicines are wrapped) to the effect that music, after the painful and half-articulate labours of past ages, has at last come to fruition in "Petrouchka." "Petrouchka" has indeed become a popular idol on whose altar many a young composer has sacrificed potential originality. And if any enterprising concert-party would tour the "Halls" with "Pribautki" and the "Berceuses du Chat," their success would be assured. This is not written in disparagement of the little pieces: our "music-halls" are an excellent institution and provide a far more appropriate *milieu* for the appreciation of such things than the concert room. Malipiero is another composer whose music has recently been puffed into prominence. Four new orchestral works of his composition have been produced in London since the autumn without leaving the most sanguine critics with more than vague hopes of the fulfilment of "promise."

There remains a Seryabin-epidemic to record. Seryabin is a composer whom the public has long been taught to regard reverentially from afar, through the cloud of dust raised by scribes and propagandists. The word "mystery" has been used in awesome tones and the public, mindful no doubt of the verse in the Book of Revelation where it is printed in large letters, has been duly impressed and excited. "Cosmic conceptions" have been handed round as readily as cosmetics, and as eagerly absorbed. Now we have had a big dose of the actual music and, apparently, we are clamouring for more, especially those of us who have grown just a little tired of our MacDowell. Three all-Seryabin recitals were announced in January alone, and Mr. Coates has given several magnificent performances of the "Ecstasy" poem which our customary

lack of discrimination between performance and music performed has caused to be acclaimed a masterpiece. There is nothing at all difficult or obscure about the music. Harmonically it is very simple, once the un-common-chord basis has been realized, and very restricted, and while there are rhythmic figures which, in isolation, might have a certain independence and vitality, they all seem to be struggling painfully in the glutinous mush of the harmonic tissue, like flies in treacle. Though fully aware of the opprobrium and ridicule with which the "saved" will greet the comparison, I cannot help remarking that Seryabin, with his luscious, languishing chord-clots, his pseudo-religious eroticism and naïve excursions, as of the unwillingly-virtuous, into the realm of Satan, appears to be the direct apostolic successor of Charles Gounod.

We live in an age of sensationalism, superlatives and exaggeration and it is perhaps inevitable that drums should be beaten and trumpets blown on behalf of music as of everything else: but some of us are listening more intently for the still small voice of the genius who will "take homely and familiar things and make them fresh and beautiful" at his touch.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is very good news that the firm of Winthrop Rogers, Ltd., are embarking upon a complete, faithful and unbowdlerized edition of the songs of the English lutenists, beginning with John Dowland. This firm is an honourable exception among the London song-publishers so justly rebuked by Mr. Plunket Greene in the last number of *Music and Letters*.

PHILIP HESELTINE.

## CORRESPONDENCE

March 7th, 1920.

DEAR SIR,

My attention has been called in the last week to a sentence in an article on myself in your first number, which mentions a clique associated with the name of the late Sir Hubert Parry. Cliques have always existed in music and always will exist; they do not matter. All I am concerned with is the mention of Sir Hubert Parry's name, with the implication that he in some way slighted me. This is quite a mistake.

The moment to enumerate the many occasions on which Parry advised and encouraged me is not now; I hope to make known all I owe to his ungrudging kindness at some future time.

Yours faithfully.

EDWARD ELGAR.

*The Athenæum.*

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

*The Foundations of Music.* By Henry J. Watt, D.Phil. Camb. Univ. Press, 19s. net.

It is not possible in the space of a brief review to discuss adequately a theory so difficult and complex as the one here put before us. Dr. Watt's object has been, apparently, to describe the foundations of musical theory in purely psychical (as distinct from physical) terms; in other words, to explain the phenomena of consonance and dissonance, and some of their musical implications, without reference to the harmonic series of upper partial tones, which (whatever its importance from the physical point of view) does not enter directly into the musical consciousness. Dr. Watt's ideas are based largely on what he calls "the volumic theory of fusion," and before considering his treatment of "fusion" (which is both helpful and promising), I must admit that the theory of "volume" has caused me nothing except perplexity. He defines "volume" as:—

That difference between tones of different pitch that makes the low tone great massive, all-pervasive, and the high tone small, thin and light.

Let us assume that volume exists, and concede for the sake of argument (though I find it by no means obvious) that difference of volume is quantitative and not qualitative. Even so, I cannot, with the best will in the world, understand what is meant by the "overlapping" of volumes, by means of which Dr. Watt endeavours to establish the ratios of the volumes of tones. The "overlapping of volumes" is a phenomenon of which my ear is entirely unconscious, and the diagrams given do not in the least help me to realize it as part of my auditory experience. My bewilderment is deepened by the next page, where Dr. Watt says that "the proof given has not for its object the re-proving of truths concerning physical ratios but the demonstration of an entirely new object, namely, the ratios of the volumes of tones *solely as they are heard*" (italics mine). How on earth can any man hear a ratio?

A musician, however, has no unnatural passion for ratios, and he will not find the whole of the argument invalidated by the above difficulty. He can quite well take the idea of "fusion" as a starting point, and find much to admire and enjoy in the development of it. In particular, the disquisition on consecutives and "hidden" (or rather, as they prove to be, "exposed") consecutives is suggestive and convincing, though chiefly of historical interest. At the same time, does not Dr. Watt put too much trust in "paraphony" and too little in "convention?" Musicians insist on increasing their *materia musica*, and as there is no room for expansion at the consonantal end, there must be a continual enlargement in the opposite direction, with a corresponding shift in the

point of balance. If you like to call this an extension of the "paraphonic zone," well and good, but for Dr. Watt, we suspect, paraphony remains largely a matter of thirds and sixths, despite all "modifying factors." If so, we cannot accept his edict (p. 206) that "the needs of paraphony must always be satisfied." The general tendency of current musical practice is decidedly anti-paraphonic, and we should rather like to hear what Dr. Watt has to say about it.

R. O. M.

*Impressions that Remained.* By Ethel Smyth. 2 vols. Longmans, 28s. *net.*

A book of memoirs by a musician who has literary genius is a rare thing. In the case of *Impressions that Remained* the unusual has happened, and the result is a masterpiece. A penetrating power of keen-eyed criticism is tempered in Dr. Ethel Smyth by a never failing sense of humour, and a tenderness for weaker brothers not often found in a nature so positive and so unfaltering in the pursuit of its own ends. And the criticism is turned first of all unmercifully inwards; though it would be beside the point to praise a frankness and integrity that is obviously inherent. There is little technical talk of music, and the non-musical reader will not be deterred by jargon; but the love of music which has been the prime mover in the writer's life is the thread which strings together the series of ardent passionate friendships which mark the different stages in her book.

One sees how, even in early years, the small Ethel made her mark upon her surroundings. Her strong individuality combined a passion for adventure with an intense capacity for feeling and a certain hardheadedness and love of swimming against the stream, which certainly did not decrease as the years wore on. Much she inherited from her mother, the tale of whose relations with this particular daughter,—relations so tender and yet so tense that both were at times almost unbearably chafed by them,—is one of the most beautiful and poignant things in the book. From her she inherited her musical talent—"My mother was one of the most naturally musical people I have ever known"—and doubtless also that other talent for making pictures in words—"To see things wittily and express them felicitously came natural to her."

In her early twenties she must have burst into the sheltered conservative life of the Leipzig musical world like a gust of March wind. No one could be indifferent to her. A few seem to have turned up their coat collars and hurried disapprovingly home to their own rather overheated dwellings, shutting the door against the boisterous visitor, but to others she was welcome as Spring itself. In these early Leipzig days began the friendship with Frau von Herzogenberg, or "Lisl," which was, both humanly and musically speaking, the great influence in Ethel Smyth's life for many years, and the disastrous ending to which was the catastrophe of her youth. The story of that friendship,—“Surely the very tenderest relation that can ever have sprung up between a woman and one who, in spite of her years, was little better than a child,”—and of its unaccountable rupture, is the main theme of the book; and Lisl's tragically early death, with her secret still unspoken, leaves us with an unresolved discord.

The book takes us only to the early middle life of the writer; we hope that the impressions of more recent years have been recorded in the same



inimitable fashion, and that we shall some day have the delight of following further in her own words the career of one who has a genius not only for living but for re-living life.

D. M. H.

*College Addresses.* By C. H. H. Parry. Edited, with a recollection of the author, by H. C. Colles. Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net.

This little volume is welcome as a pendant to Parry's other writings. One would hardly have expected to find permanent interest in such material—the addresses delivered by the Director of an institution at the beginning of each term to the assembled pupils. Yet they are of interest, because their sincerity survives the test of cold print. Many men would have found it convenient to evolve a formula for such discourses; not so Parry. No two of them are the same; sometimes there is a definite occasion to serve as text—the death of Brahms, a change of President, the award of the Royal Humane Society's medal to one of the students; sometimes there is no such occasion, and the speaker takes whatever subject comes uppermost in his mind. Yet in every case the words live; even when there is nothing particularly new or striking in what Parry says, his remarks go home, because he so unmistakably means them. You never feel that he is speaking just because it is part of his official duties as Director to deliver an appropriate homily on that particular occasion. Mr. Colles has made his selection with judgment, and the addresses forming this volume cover a wide range of topics and a long interval of time—from the death of Sir George Grove, the first director, in 1894, to the raid on Zeebrugge, in April 1918, only six months before Parry's own death. The last four or five addresses were all delivered during the period of the war, and contain some frank speaking, with an honourable confession that he, Parry, had made a mistake in setting a too exalted value on Teutonic culture and civilisation. One could wish that he had been equally clear-sighted with regard to some of his own colleagues. He refers to his teaching staff more than once in terms of such indiscriminate eulogy, that it would be sheer dishonesty to refrain from pointing out that the teaching at the College was not in every case as worthy of admiration as he supposed it to be. He was loyal to a fault, and his loyalty made him too willing to assume that all was for the best in the best of all possible colleges.

R. O. M.

*A Musical Motley.* By Ernest Newman. John Lane, 7s. 6d. net.

One need not be in agreement with Mr. Newman's judgment on all points to be able to realise how important a part his critical work has played in musical developments during the last ten years, and in the best of these essays his arguments are as arresting and his conclusions as deserving of consideration as ever. The author is happiest and most attractive where he is drawing on his extensive knowledge of scores and themes in illustration of some point he is making, as in "Quotation in Music." In the more serious articles Mr. Newman discusses such subjects as harmony, and theories of harmony ("The Elastic Language"), originality and methods of composition ("The Amateur Composer," "Originality and the Amateur" and "Professionalism in Composition"). He is, by the way, less convincing than usual when he is contesting Strauss's statement as to the amount of cool head-work necessary in composition.

A considerable portion of the book is taken up with satirical articles on the work and experiences of a musical critic, and here the effort tends to become laboured and the writer's touch heavy.

Most of the other articles are, to quote the words of the preface "in intention at any rate, gay" and some of them—"Recipes," "The gramophone in the past" and "The recorder of Silences," for example—are quite delightful. Mr. Newman as humorist, however, does not compel our unreserved admiration; his special equipment and his gifts of penetrating analysis, of close argument and of brilliant analogical illustration show to greater advantage in more serious work.

In a collection so diverse in aim and style some attempt at classification would have been welcome to the general reader, as tending to diminish the scattered effect of the book; but the volume makes capital reading.

G. E. L.

*Practical Hints on Orchestration.* By Adam Carse. Augener, 1s.

Mr. Carse's book is eminently practical and contains much good advice of a homely kind. Many things in musical composition which are usually taken for granted need stating in plain words every now and then. For example: "Music composed for orchestra should be conceived ready scored, imagined and orchestrated in the mind in one operation, as one thought . . . no one would think of first writing a piece of music and then deciding whether it is to be a choral work or a piano piece or a violin solo." Nevertheless Mr. Carse, knowing the frailties of the average composer, has many sound hints for the disguising of piano-made music in orchestral garb, with especial regard to figuration and chord-disposition for strings.

It is a pity that his illustrations stop short at Tchaikowsky and that he should have confined his remarks to the full orchestra. A practical handbook on scoring for theatre bands is badly needed.

P. H.

*An Introduction to British Music.* By Percy A. Scholes. Palmer and Hayward, 2s. 6d. net.

MR. SCHOLES claims for his *Introduction to British Music* that "it is so simple that any intelligent schoolboy who cared for music could understand it." That is in the main true, though if you are going to mention things like Organum and Faburden it would be better not to compare them respectively with bad concertina and mouth-organ playing. That is the kind of thing that sticks in the mind of a schoolboy. So long as *British Music* forms a duly proportionate part of a course of general musical history, text-books like this will do no harm. But it is no use studying Byrd and ignoring the very name of Palestrina—and so on. "Musick," as Mr. Scholes quotes from the preface to "Parthenia," "like that miraculous tongue of the Apostles, having but one and the same character, is alike known to all the sundry nations of the world."

P. H.

*An Introduction to French Music.* By G. Jean-Aubry. Palmer and Hayward, 2s. 6d. net.

M. Jean-Aubry begins his book with a foreword on "Why we should study French music," in which he lays more stress on the Frenchness

than on the intrinsic merits of the music. The rest of the very slender volume is neither criticism nor catalogue and leaves very little impression, the four pages devoted to Berlioz being specially inadequate. It is difficult to see the necessity for this work when there exists an "introduction to French music" as comprehensive and well-arranged as Octave Séré's "Musiciens français d'aujourd'hui."

P. H.

*Les Orgues de l'Abbaye de Saint Mihiel. Anciennes Orgues de la Région Meusienne.* By Félix Raugel. Paris, L'Echo Musical, 10 frs.

There is pathos about this book. The title recalls that curious promontory in the German line so conspicuous on our war maps for weary years. The work was written before August 1914, and all the organs described in it, with one exception, have been dismantled or wrecked. That one exception was due to the "conscience artistique" of a Wurtemberg organ builder. Becoming interested in what he had been ordered to destroy he held his hand. "Je risque gros, dit-il, en tournant brusquement sur les talons. Adieu ! Que St. Michel me protège en faveur du service que je viens de rendre à son église !" Two photographs of the St. Mihiel organ are given ; the first shows it as it was, the second is a tragic picture of its present state, with grinning holes instead of pipes.

The book gives full details as to the builders and organists of the several churches. Many specifications are also set out. They are interesting as showing how far ahead of ours the French builders of the eighteenth century were. The latter had not grasped the possibilities of the pedal as the Germans had, but still they had pedals, and we had none. And the author demonstrates the principles on which they worked, and the logical development which has resulted in the modern French organ. These are very different in tone from ours, and we may not like them ; it is a matter of taste. Cavallé Coll said that all our organs were like "rosbif."

M. Widor contributes one of his charming prefaces to this interesting book.

A. G.

## THE TWA CORBIES.

Border Ballad.

IVOR GURNEY.

VOICE *Largo.* *pp*

As I was walking all a-lane I

PIANO. *Largo. Misterioso.* *pp*

heard twa cor-bies mak-ing a mane; The tane un-to the ti-ther did say,

"Whar sall we gang ..... and dine the day!" .....



*pp* "In be-hint you auld fail dyke I wot there lies a new-slain knight; And *ppp*

nae-bo-dy kenst that he lies there But his hawk, his hound, and his

la - dy fair..... "His

*quicker.* hound is to the hunt-ing gane, His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,... *mf*

*quicker.* *cres.* *p*



His la-dy's ta'en an - i - ther mate, So we may mak oar din - ner

sweet...

"Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane, And I'll pike out his bon - ny blue

e'en : Wi' ae lock o' his gow - den

hair..... We'll theek our nest..... when it grows

*mf* *rit.* *ff*

*mf* *frit.* *ff*

*Tempo.*

bare.....

*ff* *Tempo.* *dim.*

*Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

*dim.* *mp* *pp*

*mf* *p* *misterioso. dim.*

"Mon-y a one for him maks mane, But nane sall ken whar he is gane ;

*p*

# THE TWA CORBIES.

175

*p*

O'er his white banes, ..... when they are bare,

*pp*

The wind sail blaw..... for ev

*ppp*

er - mair".....

*pp* *ppp*

*Ped.*

hair..... We'll theek our nest..... when it grows

*mf* *rit.* *ff*

*mf* *frit.* *ff*

*Tempo.* *ff*

bare.....

*ff* *Tempo.* *dim.*

*Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

*dim.* *mp* *pp*

*mf* *p* *misterioso. dim.* *3*

"Mon-y a one for him maks mane, But nane sall ken whar he is gane ;

# THE TWA CORBIES.

175

*p*

O'er his white banes, ..... when they are bare,

*pp*

The wind sall blaw..... for ev

*ppp*

er - mair."

*pp* *ppp*

*Ped.*



# "THE LITTLE BOY LOST."

Words by WM. BIAKE.

HERBERT HOWELL.

VOICE.

*Moderato, sempre un poco rubato.*

*mp* "Fa - ther, *mf* fa - ther, where are you go - ing? *mf* O....

do not walk so fast! - Speak, father, speak to your lit - tle boy,

*poco rit.* ..... Or else I shall be lost. .... *a tempo.* *più amorzando.*

*dim.* *pp* *p*

2 Fed.

THE LITTLE BOY LOST.

177

*p mezzo voce.*

The night was dark, No fa-ther was there, The

*pp*

child was wet with dew..... The mire was deep.....

*ppp*

..... And the child did weep..... And a way... ..

*ppp*

..... the va-pour flew.....

*ppp*

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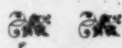
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